

THE ASSUMPTION OF ADEQUACY:
OPERATION SAFE HAVEN, A CHAPLAIN'S VIEW

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General Studies

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE ASSUMPTION OF ADEQUACY: OPERATION SAFE HAVEN, A CHAPLAIN'S VIEW by CH (MAJ) Robert N. Neske, USA, 88 pages.

This study is an investigation of a little known Humanitarian Assistance, Military Operation Other Than War, Operation Safe Haven. This operation took place from 8 September 1994 to 15 March 1995 in the Republic of Panama. The purpose of the operation was to relieve the overcrowded migrant camps at Guantanamo Naval Base by establishing four camps on Empire Range, Panama, to provide a safe haven for up to ten thousand Cuban migrants. These were migrants who had attempted to enter the United States illegally by crossing the Florida Straits in boats and rafts during the summer of 1994. This study is a history of that event.

Operation Safe Haven was a response to a crisis in the immigration policies of the United States. Like many other events in the life of the nation, Operation Safe Haven began with the very best of intentions, and like so many other events in life of the nation failed because the best of intentions cannot change the reality of a situation. This study focuses on the role of the Chaplaincy in the course of Operation Safe Haven, and the overriding approach the Chaplaincy takes to missions of this kind.

The study examines the events leading up to the crisis in the U.S., Cuba, Haiti, and Panama; the operation itself; and the ministry conducted by the Ministry Teams assigned to the camps. The study proposes that operations, such as this, reveal that the Chaplaincy can no longer assume that the religious support provided in response to a given mission will always be adequate. Rather, that operations, such as Safe Haven, require that the Chaplaincy become more deliberate and intentional in its planning, and in its overall approach to ministry.

This study recommends that the way to implement intentionality of ministry is for the Chaplaincy to be integrated into the military decision making process. It also calls for the development of chaplain doctrine as it relates to civilians both on the battlefield and in humanitarian assistance/peacekeeping operations.

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PREFACE

Religious Support tasks remain constant, only conditions change.

Initial Observations: Chaplaincy Operations Operation Uphold Democracy

It has become commonplace in the news media to hear reporters refer to their coverage of an event as the “first rough draft of history,” if this is true, then it must follow that the academic study and analysis of that same event must constitute the second draft of history. This is a history thesis. It is the history of a Humanitarian Assistance (HA), Military Operation Other Than War (MOOTW) from a chaplain's point of view.

The operation was called: Operation Safe Haven. It was conducted by a Joint Task Force (JTF) under the overall command of General Barry McCaffrey in the Republic of Panama from September 1994 to March 1995. In September 1994, 8,986 Cuban migrants who had attempted to float across the Straits of Florida to the United States were brought from Guantanamo Naval Base (GITMO) to four camps in Panama. The operation would last for six months.

From the beginning, this little known operation was unlike the majority of MOOTW conducted by US Forces. Few soldiers deployed from their home station (at least initially). Rather, the mission deployed to them. It was also different because unlike other MOOTW actions, the families of the military service member (again, initially) were a part of the operation.

This is a history of that operation. It will be somewhat subjective in nature because the author was an observer of and sometime a participant in the operation. Additionally, because this is a history, it will consider events that took place in Haiti, Cuba, the United States, and Panama as they touched upon and influenced the conduct of this operation since history never occurs in a vacuum.

As this history is being told from a chaplain's point of view, it will consider the operation itself, and the religious support provided by the Unit Ministry Teams (UMTs) of the United States Army South (USARSO) who were charged with the task of providing pastoral care and religious support to the soldiers, their family members, and the Cuban migrants in the camps.

This thesis will also examine the premise upon which the US Military Chaplain's Corps conducts its mission in a humanitarian assistance, (MOOTW) environment. This premise is expressed in the After Action Review (AAR) for another MOOTW, Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti: "Religious support tasks remain constant, only conditions change. The doctrine laid out in these documents [referring to Joint Pub 1-05 and FM 16-1] is *more than adequate* [italics mine] for OOTW. As stated in the Joint Religious Support Publication, "Religious ministry support activities cover a wide range of professional functions accomplished across the entire operational continuum. Because there may be no precise boundary where one condition (peace, conflict, and war) ends and another begins, changes in religious ministry support activities will be more a matter of changing intensity and emphasis than dramatically altered duties." In all operations, the primary mission of religious support personnel is to advise the commander and

provide religious support to service members (Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) 1994, 236).

This assumption of adequacy is a bold if not arrogant assumption to make and has sparked the primary research question for this thesis which is as follows: Given the normal ambiguity and complexity of Humanitarian Assistance Military Operations Other Than War, can the Military Chaplaincy continue to assume the adequacy of its doctrine and make no distinction between religious support tasks in war and humanitarian assistance MOOTW?

The subordinate questions are: (1) If the primary mission of chaplains is to advise the commander and provide religious support to service members, what is the chaplain's responsibility to civilians when they have been brought into the equation? (2) How do you do the job of including the chaplain mission analysis process? and (3) What lessons from Operation Safe Haven might be taken that will enable chaplains to provide a better quality of ministry in future humanitarian assistance MOOTW?

Literature Review

At this point in time, very little has been written about Operation Safe Haven. To date, no books on the subject have appeared in print, either books about the operation itself or books by any of the Cuban migrants.

At the outset of researching this thesis, it was thought that the primary source of information about Safe Haven would come from newspaper accounts. Unfortunately, this has been a very shallow well. The accounts found in US newspapers, most notably the *New York Times* and the *Miami Herald* (International Edition) tend to be concerned

with reporting key events, specifically: (1) the arrival of the first migrants to Panama, (2) the unrest in the camps sparked by a brief riot in Camp Number 1, in October of 1994, (3) the major riot that broke out in two camps causing injury to 236 soldiers in December of 1994, and (4) the departure of the migrants from Panama back to Guantanamo (Operation Safe Passage) in February 1995.

While the *Miami Herald* covered the exodus of rafts from Cuba extensively over the summer of 1994, very little was written about the migrants in Panama after they were sent there from Guantanamo. Considering the audience for which it writes, this was curious if not understandable. Unless there is a crisis of some sort, people sitting in camps cut out of the jungle is pretty boring stuff.

The Army Times is the only periodical that did an article on the operation that covered life in the camps for the migrants and the soldiers caring for them. If there are similar newspaper articles out there, regrettably they did not come to light.

The Military Police, a professional bulletin for the Military Police (MP) Branch had a very helpful article by Major David Van Laar about the MP Command's response to the riots and the lessons learned there.

Two AARs from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, were very helpful. The first entitled "*Initial Observations May 1995, Migrant Camp Operations, Panama/Cuba*" and the second for Operation Restore Democracy Haiti Center for Army Lessons Learned: observations October 1994, Operation Uphold Democracy which provoked the impetus for this thesis and its title.

Another AAR entitled "After Action Report Joint Task Force Safe Haven 26 August 1994--15 March 1995," Volume One was provided by the USARSO historian, Ms. Delores Demena. It contains the Commanders comments and a chronology. If there is a volume II, it is packed and unavailable due to the impending transfer of USARSO from Fort Clayton, Panama, to Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. Ms. Demena was also kind enough to include a copy of the *USARSO Annual Command History for Fiscal Year 1994* and a copy of the Press Kit briefing slides which were made available to VIPs and members of the media visiting JTF Safe Haven.

The transfer of the US Southern Command to Miami from Quarry Heights meant that the Command Historian for that unit was unable to provide information as the records were still packed and in storage. Informal conversation with officers stationed in SOUTHCOM indicated that at the time of the transition to Miami, a great deal of material was destroyed in the shredding machines.

Some historical material from the operation was passed to Chaplain (Colonel) John Brinsfield, author of the most recent volume of the history of the Chaplains Corps. Chaplain Brinsfield reported that some material is in storage at Fort Belvoir and was not immediately available. He did, however, pass along the names of chaplains who provided material to him and they were contacted directly for information.

Religious support doctrine, as well as doctrine regarding HA and MOOTW, was taken from the appropriate Army regulations (ARs), field manuals (FMs), and publications (PUBs) most notably: AR 165-1, *Chaplain Activities in the United States Army*; FM 16-1, *Religious Support*; FM 100-5, *Operations*; FM 100-23-1, *HA*; Joint Pub

3-07, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*; Joint Pub 1-05, *Religious Ministry Support for Joint Operations*; and FM 100-23, *Peace Operations*.

The Internet provided a number of articles that were helpful in providing background material on the reason for the surge of migration from Cuba, as well as both Cuban and Panamanian relations with the US. There were few mentions of Safe Haven to be found on the net. Contrary to popular belief, not everything is to be found on the net.

Two chaplains Chaplain (Colonel) David Goodwillie, USA (Retired), former command chaplain, and Chaplain (Major) Vern Jordin, USA, former Battalion Chaplain for 5-87 Infantry, provided written material and their reflections on the operation. Almost all of the other chaplains mentioned in the thesis were interviewed by phone or in person as they passed through Fort Leavenworth to attend the Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3).

Methodology

The process for gathering information focused immediately on obtaining stories from the print media especially as noted earlier copies of the *New York Times* and the *Miami Herald*. While the *Times* was readily available, the *Miami Herald*, whose International Edition had been the only English-language daily newspaper available in Panama, was nowhere to be found, certainly not in Kansas, and not in Western Missouri. Mrs. Dorothy Rogers, who is in charge of interlibrary loans at the Combined Arms Research Library, was relentless in her quest to get microfilm of the *Miami Herald*.

While it took fully four months to do so, the University of Florida at Tallahassee was willing to loan the films.

By the time the microfilm started to arrive, the dearth of material first hand or otherwise had become painfully clear. It had quickly become clear that the most effective way to obtain information was going to be from those who had been participants in the operation. The initial plan called for a series of questions to be sent to those willing to participate, to be answered in writing or on tape.

The first challenge was to find the chaplains and assistants who had been either stationed in Panama or deployed there for Safe Haven. This was no small matter since a number of those involved here, over the last four years, either retired, or left the Armed Forces to pursue employment in the private sector.

Response from those individuals was less than enthusiastic as inquiries for the most part went unanswered. The most notable exception was Chaplain David Goodwillie who was very helpful.

Active duty personnel, once located, were more willing to assist, but very reluctant to spend time writing or taping their remembrances (to the point that the idea of using tape was quickly abandoned as a bad idea). The usual response to phone inquires as to their willingness to participate was along the lines of: Sure, I'd like to help, but why don't we set up a time, and we can just talk. This became the norm and once the conversations got going, their remembrances and reflections about the operation and their ministry filled in any number of gaps in the overall narrative. Chaplains coming

through Fort Leavenworth for CAS3, as noted earlier, were regularly ambushed for information, and were routinely charitable and generous in sharing their remembrances.

Lieutenant Colonel James S. Ladd had brought to my attention a videotape of the riots at Camp One that is available for viewing at CALL. While providing no new information, it was helpful to see it and get a sense of the Camp at that moment in time.

A semantic note, the reader may have noticed the use of two similar terms: Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) and Operations Other Than War (OOTW). The first term comes out of Joint Pub 3-07, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*. OOTW comes from FM 100-5, *Operations*, and is used by the US Army. A third term for the same type of operation: Stability and Support Operation (SASO) has recently been put forward by the US Army Training and Doctrine Command, but to date has seen limited adoption.

As Operation Safe Haven was a Joint Operation, Military Operations Other Than War as defined by Joint Pub 3-07 its acronym MOOTW, will be used throughout this thesis. The only exceptions will be found if one of the other terms is cited as part of a direct quotation.

One last point is: as it was noted earlier the author of this thesis was also a participant in the operation. There will be times, particularly in chapters 2 and 3 when the narrative reflects the recollections of the author. Sometimes reference will be made to the Chaplain Resource Manager, the position held by the author, at other times, it will simply say the author. On these occasions the narrative will reflect a synthesis of remembered pieces of conversation, briefings attended, and opinions voiced by others to

the author. Where possible reference will be made to the individuals involved, at other times this will not be possible as those conversations have simply become part of the author recollections.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

The year 1994 is generally remembered for two things. The first is the arrest of former football star and spokesperson for the Hertz Rental Car Company, O. J. Simpson, for the murder of his estranged wife; and the tabloid and/or soap opera-like proceedings that would obsess the nation for the next year. The second was the national elections of that year that resulted in the Republican Party's regaining majority control of the House of Representatives for the first time in over thirty years. The first event would establish a new low point for the press, the American judicial system, and race relations in the United States. The second marked a paradigm shift in the politics of the nation as the new Republican congress began to outline its "Contract with America."

All but unnoticed in the coverage of car chases that went nowhere, dancing Itos, and campaign advertisements was the fact that in 1994 the administration of President Bill Clinton sought to resolve two crises in illegal immigration (one from Haiti, the other from Cuba) with the use of the military: Operation Restore Democracy (Haiti) and Operation Safe Haven-Panama (Cuba).

Illegal immigration, especially for the "border states" of Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, had become a sensitive item on the administration's list of concerns. The flow of illegal immigrants from Haiti and Cuba (in Florida) and Mexico and Central America (for those states whose borders touch Mexico), social services and educational infrastructures was overwhelming.

Elsewhere in the US the seemingly uninterrupted flow of drugs from South America that passed through these same borders increasingly led many Americans to believe that between drugs and illegal immigrants, the US had effectively lost control of its own borders.

For the Clinton administration, the short-term solution to the problem of illegal Haitian immigration was the continuation of the policy established by the previous administration of President George Bush. That policy consisted of either returning the migrants to Haiti or detaining them at Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba. Ironically:

During the election campaign (1992), Bill Clinton criticized Bush for his 'cruel policy' of returning Haitian refugees without an asylum hearing. Shortly after Clinton was elected, however, the news media began to report that thousands of Haitians were building boats to escape to the US. Through confidential briefings and selected leaks to the press, officials of the outgoing Bush administration conveyed their fear that, if the president-elect postponed a decision on Haitian refugees, he would be faced with a massive boatlift during his first week in office. Thus on 14 January 1993, Clinton announced that he would continue the Bush policy of using the US Coast Guard to return Haitian refugees. (Pastor, 1996, 5)

In the long term, however, the only viable solution to the problem of illegal immigration was the restoration of the democratically elected president of the country, Jean Bertrand Aristide. Aristide had been ousted after only seven months in office by the Haitian military under Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras.

Throughout the first year of the Clinton administration, attempts were made to negotiate a settlement with the Haitian military. Yet each attempt to find some resolution to the situation, be it diplomatic or military, was thwarted. This included the

blocking of the USS *Harlan County* when it attempted to land US and United Nations peacekeeping forces at Port-Au-Prince, by Haitian paramilitary forces.

Again to quote Pastor's article: "In July 1994, the United States persuaded the UN Security Council to pass a resolution which called upon its member states to use force to compel the Haitian military to accept the return of Aristide. This was a watershed event in international relations--the first time that the UN Security Council had authorized the use of force for the purpose of restoring democracy to a member state. In August 1994, President Clinton decided that the United States would take the lead in an invasion and preparations got underway" (Pastor 1996, 5).

However, before an invasion could take place; "General Raoul Cedras, commander of the Haitian military . . . opened a dialogue with former President Jimmy Carter, whom he had met during the 1990 elections. When Carter informed President Clinton of the talks, the president decided to send Carter together with Senator Sam Nunn, and General Colin Powell, to make one last try at negotiating the departure of Haiti's military leaders" (Pastor 1996, 5).

After a series of missteps and miscommunications which almost led to the total collapse of all communications, the Carter, Nunn, and Powell team ultimately succeeded in getting to the Haitian military to: (1) step down and leave the country, (2) allow US/UN forces to land and establish a peacekeeping and stability operation, and (3) allow the return of President Aristide as the democratically elected leader of Haiti.

The process of stemming the flow of immigrants from that country had begun. However, there were still some ten thousand Haitians at Guantanamo Bay that the US

military wanted to see return to Haiti. This was in large part due to the level of ignorance of the Haitian migrants about such basic things as personal hygiene and the number of migrants who were also Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) positive (Brinsfield 1995, 201).

If the situation with Haitian migrants which President Clinton had inherited from President Bush was awkward, the migrant problem related to Cuba that Clinton had inherited from his last eight predecessors, was far more complex. For nearly thirty-five years Cuban exiles living in the US had been living symbols of the Cold War and of evils of communism that lay a scant ninety miles from Florida. The Cold War was over and the communism of Castro in shambles, but the exiles had become a political force in America. One example being the extremely powerful Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) which has influenced the political life of South Florida and provided overwhelming support to the Republican Party since the 1970s (Leo Grande 1998, 7).

Cubans living in the United States have had an ambivalence about the United States since the 1880s, well before the Spanish-American War. It is often forgotten that there have been Cuban exiles, refugees, or migrants, call them what you will, since the last century. In the *New York Times* article “Retracing Cuban Patriots Path (10 May 1998, 9) Jose Marti, revolutionary hero, martyr, and poet of Cuba, for example, once published a newspaper for Cuban exiles living in New York City in the 1880s.

Yet even as these earlier migrants sought refuge in the United States, their feelings about this country were decidedly mixed. As David Rieff in his article “Cuba

Refrozen" in *Foreign Affair* noted: "In their own minds, whether rebelling against the Spanish or confronting Americans, Cubans are continually doing mythic battle. 'It is my duty' Jose Marti, the apostle of Cuban independence wrote shortly before his death, 'to prevent, by the independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading over the West Indies, and falling, with that added weight upon other lands of our America . . . My weapon is only the slingshot of David'" (Rieff 1996, 2).

It would be safe to say that very little has changed since 1895. Once again to quote Mr. Rieff: "To listen to Fidel Castro, his regime's success in withstanding American domination counts for more than its failure to run the economy. 'We have resisted for 35 years,' the Maximum Leader declared in a recent speech, 'and if necessary we will resist for 35 years more'" (Rieff 1996, 2). Yet it was precisely Castro's failure to run the economy that brought about the immigration crises of 1994.

To quote William M. LeoGrande in his article "From Havana to Miami: US Cuba policy as a two level game" in *The Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*:

In 1988 the Cubans conducted approximately 75 percent of their trade with the Soviet Union and another 15 percent with Eastern Europe. When the Eastern European regimes collapsed in 1982, their trade with Cuba fell to almost nothing. As the Soviet Union disintegrated, Cuba had to renegotiate trade agreements with the newly independent states and establish contracts with the private firms that arose as the centrally planned economy was privatized. (Leo Grande, 5)

The biggest blow to Cuba, however, was the loss of Soviet economic assistance. By the late 1980s, the Soviets were providing between three billion and four billion dollars a year in economic aid (David Rieff argues that it was closer to eight billion), mostly in the form of subsidized trade prices. These subsidies ended when the Soviet Union collapsed. The loss of aid severely reduced Cuba's import capacity, and the resulting shortages of key raw materials like fuel and fertilizer caused huge production losses in both manufacturing and

agriculture. Cuba's sugar crop, which remained the principal source of foreign exchange earnings was eight million tons in 1990, but by 1993 it had fallen to just four million tons. Consumer goods of all types became extremely scarce, unemployment rose, and the standard of living contracted abruptly. By most estimates Cuba's gross national product fell between 35 and 50 percent from 1988 to 1993. (Leo Grande 1998, 5)

As the Cuban economy fell apart and the basic staples of day-to-day life, such as food, fuel, clothing, and shoes (trade items that in the past had come from the Warsaw Pact nations) became harder and harder to find, the rhetoric of the revolution and the seven-hour long speeches of the Maximum Leader lost much of the resonance for the Cuban people. The unthinkable began to occur, people began to protest the fact that the Castro regime had allowed the economy to turn into a shambles. The people wanted an economy that worked, not speeches, and the Castro government did not have the first clue as to where to begin.

Many on the island began to look North across the straits of Florida to the United States, some 92 miles away. They began to reconsider long held positions regarding those who in the past had left Cuba for the US. Perhaps those people were not as the Castro government declared, cowards and traitors to the revolution. What if those who had fled Cuba were simply those who had seen the future and made some practical decisions on behalf of their families?

The fact that most Cubans had relatives living in Dade County, Florida, or Union City, New Jersey, or one of the other cities along the eastern coast of the United States no doubt fueled their thinking (Leo Grande 1998, 6).

Another consideration, one that Cubans fleeing the island had relied on since the early sixties was the fact that under US Immigration laws, Cubans enjoyed a special status. Once they landed on US soil, Cubans were considered to be political refugees from a Communist dictatorship and were immediately granted political asylum. Their status as political refugees meant they were entitled to public assistance and the use of social services (Leo Grande 1998, 13).

Cubans began to build and employ all manner of homemade rafts. In 1990 the US Coast Guard picked up 467 rafters. In 1993 the number grew to 3,656. By June 1994, the number was well past 4,000 and the *Miami Herald* began running a little box on the front page of the newspaper with the number rescued from the sea for that day and the total number picked up so far for the year (*Miami Herald* 1994, 9A).

As the economic situation in Cuba grew worse, people began to take more desperate and violent measures. They began to hijack boats and planes. On 13 July 1994, thirty-seven people were drowned when a tugboat they had hijacked was rammed and sunk by other tugboats under Cuban authority. Two policemen were killed in August when hijackers attempted to take a ferry in a Havana harbor. This incident led to rioting along the waterfront. Thousands chanting anti-Castro slogans routed police and looted stores. It was the worst antigovernment demonstration in thirty-five years (Leo Grande 1996, 8).

When, within days of the riots, a young naval officer was killed in another hijack attempt, Castro announced that the authorities would not stop anyone who wanted to leave as long as they did not try to hijack a boat or a plane. Once Cubans realized that

the police would take no action against them, the number of people went from close to fifty a day, to hundreds. In fact on 17 August, the US Coast Guard plucked 547 rafters from the sea (Leo Grande, 8).

To again quote Mr. Leo Grande:

For Lawton Chiles, Democratic governor of Florida, the surge of Cuban refugees represented a mortal political threat. Chiles was locked in a tight race for reelection and immigration was a hot issue. The influx of refugees from Cuba, Haiti, and elsewhere had severely strained Florida's social services and provoked an anti-immigration backlash among the electorates. As the number of rafters rose, Chiles warned the White House that he would declare a state of emergency and deploy the National Guard if necessary to control the flow of refugees into the state.

President Clinton was sympathetic. The 1980 Mariel exodus had made President Carter appear weak and incapable of controlling US borders, just as the 1980 presidential election campaign began. Some twenty thousand of the Mariel refugees had been sent to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, for processing. Riots at the camp had embarrassed then governor Clinton and contributed to his defeat for reelection. "No new Mariel," White House aides repeated to one another as the 1994 crisis developed. 'Remember Fort Chaffee. (Leo Grande 1998, 8)

No one wanted a new Mariel not even the Cuban-American community or the politically powerful CANF. When reporters from the *Miami Herald* suggested that possibility to various leaders within the Cuban community in Miami, each was adamant in rejecting that option out of hand. Although some did express a wistful desire to take a boat and pick up friends and family members rather than see them at the mercy of the seas" (*Miami Herald* 1994, 17).

No one wanted a new Mariel because from a political point of view the boat lift had not only damaged the election campaigns of a president and a governor, but it had done irreparable damage to reputation of the Cuban-American community in the United

States. In 1980 Cubans living in the US were viewed by most Americans as hard working, self-reliant, contributing members of society. Then came Mariel with Castro not just allowing his political malcontents to leave, but the criminal, the retarded, and the insane as well. This became the American view of the Cuban community and twenty years of hard work went out the window. No one wanted another Mariel (Leo Grande 1998, 8).

On 19 August 1994, President Clinton held a press briefing in which he stated the following:

In recent weeks the Castro regime has encouraged Cubans to take to the sea in unsafe vessels to escape their nations internal problems. In so doing, it has risked the lives of thousands of Cubans and several have already died in their efforts to leave. . . . The United States will do everything within its power to ensure that Cuban lives are saved and that the current outflow of refugees is stopped. Today I have ordered that illegal refugees from Cuba will not be allowed to enter the United States. Refugees rescued at sea will be taken to our naval base at Guantanamo, while we explore the possibility of other safe havens within the region.

To enforce this policy, I have directed the Coast Guard to continue its expanded effort to stop any boat illegally attempting to bring Cubans to the United States. The United States will detain, investigate, and if necessary prosecute Americans who take to the sea to pick up Cubans. Vessels used in such activities will be seized" (Clinton, 1).

It was a dramatic move for the Clinton administration, one which immediately came under fire from the Cuban-American community angered at having lost their special immigration status. Cuban refugees were now on an equal level with Haitians trying to enter Florida or Mexicans trying to cross the border at the Rio Grande.

This was a positive step for the Clinton administration which had been under fire from human rights activists who were critical of the preferential treatment given to

Cubans over those refugees from other nations in the Americas where oppression and violence were present, such as Haiti and El Salvador.

Initially, however, this new immigration policy did not appear to have the desired effect, as people continued to take to the water in anything that gave the merest appearance that it would float. However, as the US Coast Guard and elements from the US Navy began to implement Operation Sea Signal, and started returning the rafters to Guantanamo, the number of rafters went from a flood to a trickle.

Guantanamo Navy Base had been serving as a migrant collection and processing station since 1991 when Joint Task Force--Guantanamo had been established to deal with the immigration crisis of Haitians trying to make their way to Florida through the Windward Passage between Haiti and Cuba. While the JTF had been disbanded in 1992, both the mission and a very real ministry conducted by the Chaplains Corps had continued.

Interestingly enough, problems that would arise in Panama were among the challenges that had been experienced by ministry teams during JTF Guantanamo and since then. For example, the need for Roman Catholic priests who could speak the language of the migrants; the need to identify and utilize indigenous clergy who might be among the migrant population; providing ministry to people who were angry and frustrated because of the continuing uncertainty of their immigration status (Encouraging Faith, 199).

For many of the chaplains and assistants (called Religious Support Specialists and Chapel Specialists by the other services) whose ministry was directly involved with

the Haitian migrants the needs of these people was like unto a black hole in the universe. Their poverty, their ignorance regarding everything from literacy to the most basic hygiene was overwhelming. One chaplain assistant from Fort Carson, Specialist Gregory Parker, recalled having to show migrant men how to use a porta-potty (Conversation with Specialist Parker).

At the same time, the stories the migrants had to tell were so heart-wrenching that the UMTs were left frustrated by their inability to change the circumstances. Because the needs were so profound and the circumstances so sad, the ministry teams consistently reported being physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted in a matter of days.

That religious support during JTF Guantanamo was primarily conducted by chaplains and assistants from the Reserve Component on ninety-day rotations was probably the best decision made by Forces Command. Frequent rotation while at times temporarily interrupting certain programs and religious activities such as Bible studies, had a positive impact on the morale of the units and the ministry teams.

The question has been raised as whether the decision to rotate ministry teams was as good for the Haitian migrants. Considering that it was their religious support that was in suspense during each subsequent rotation of troops and ministry teams. Probably not, but if the truth be told, it is doubtful as to whether the subject ever came up. When you are unwanted to begin with, and a massive inconvenience as well, you are seldom given a vote.

The use of contract clergy would become an issue for the chaplains in JTF Safe Haven, primarily because the Commander in Chief (CinC) was concerned about his

ability to control civilian clergy. Ironically, his concern was about Protestant clergy, when the one example from past operations that might have justified his concern was a Roman Catholic (Encouraging Faith, 22).

As it was recorded in *Encouraging Faith, Serving Soldiers: A History of the US Army Chaplaincy, 1975-1995*: “Chaplain Goss, the first JTF staff chaplain, had enlisted the help of a civilian Haitian priest, Father Jacques Fabre, to help with ministry. Father Fabre spoke fluent Creole and was very effective with people. However, Father Fabre had no written job description or contract for payment of services, which made his status and support difficult. Moreover, Father Fabre disagreed with US policy and eventually joined in a suit against the government to force admission of all Haitians into the United States” (Encouraging Faith, 22).

The ministry conducted during JTF Guantanamo and afterward sought to strike a balance between providing continuing religious support to the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airman deployed to Guantanamo, and address the needs of the Haitians and then Cuban migrants.

President Clinton had stated in his press briefing: “Refugees will be taken to our naval base at Guantanamo while we explore the possibility of other safe havens within the region” (Policy Statement, 1). One of those possibilities was the Republic of Panama.

Long before the riots on the waterfront of Havana and Castro’s decision to allow migrants to leave, the numbers of people being held at Guantanamo, Haitian and Cuban, had overwhelmed the infrastructure supporting the number of people being held there.

Even after sending Navy and Marine family members back to the United States, the ability to sustain the growing population was becoming critical. One possible solution was sending the Haitians to another location. The catch was that there had to be a military presence that could administer the area and provide sufficient support for the migrants.

The two most likely sites were Fort Buchanan, in Puerto Rico, or one of the military installations in what had once been the Panama Canal Zone. The small size of Fort Buchanan made it a nonstarter from the outset, as there would be no way in which it could support, much less provide, space to shelter migrants in a Safe Haven operation. This left Panama as the only option. The problem with Panama was that the United States would need to get permission from the Panamanian government and that was not necessarily going to be forthcoming.

If diplomatic relations with Cuba are complex, then it would be safe to say that the United States relations with the Republic of Panama are positively Byzantine in their complexity. As with Cuba, our mutual difficulties with one another are rooted in our collective past and need to be understood. This means that once again, we must examine that past.

It is often forgotten that at the beginning of the 20th century, the Republic of Panama did not exist. Panama was a disgruntled province of Columbia, whose local aristocracy wished to secede. It was at this time that then President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, decided that it would be in the best interests of the United States to build a canal across Central America so that US warships and commercial shipping

could avoid the long journey around South America (David McCullough, *The Path Between Two Seas* 1977, 39).

As the French had made an attempt to dig a canal across the isthmus of Panama and failed spectacularly, nearly bankrupting the French Republic in the process, Roosevelt saw an opportunity. With the assistance of some wealthy friends and the cooperation of an incredible mixture of Panamanian patriots, corrupt Colombian officials, general scoundrels, and French bankers looking to recoup a portion of their investment, a nation was born. The United States also received a terrific deal in the bargain: the rights to dig and hold in perpetuity a canal across the isthmus of Panama and a zone extending for five miles on either side of the canal. And so the seeds of nationhood and discontent were sown (McCullough 1977, 392).

As Pastor to the Episcopal congregation on Fort Amador, the author had the opportunity to listen to the stories of people who had spent their lives in the Canal Zone. What you quickly learn is that from 1914 when the Panama Canal was opened until 1977 when the Carter-Torrijos Treaty was signed (turning over all US held territory and installations, including the canal to the Republic of Panama by 1200, 31 December 1999), there was this unique little corner of America known as the Panama Canal Zone. The communities of Balboa, Gamboa, Paraiso, Gatun were American towns with American churches, YMCAs, schools, and fraternal organizations. The dollar was the currency of exchange, the US flag waved over the US Post Office--it was America in the tropics.

You learned that the only Panamanians Americans saw in the “Zone” were the cooks, maids, and gardeners who had passes allowing them to enter the “Zone.” There were also Panamanians working on the loading docks at Balboa, but they did not work on the canal. There was an army of macheteros--machete men who cut back the jungle along the transisthmian railroad, but few if any road the railroad except to get to where they cut back the foliage. The only Panamanians who lived in the “Zone” were the maids who had quarters on the ground floor of the houses. All others passed through the control points to come to work.

For the civil servants who administered the Canal Zone, it was a little paradise if you could stand the tropics. The “Zonians” as they were called could and did. The Zone allowed them to live a life they would never have known elsewhere. A minor functionary and his family would be able to live a life only enjoyed by the wealthy back in the States. Everyone had a gardener, a cook, and a maid at the very least; it was bwana and memsab in the tropics.

When you listen to the Panamanians you get a very different perspective, the Panamanians, ninety percent of whom lived in absolute poverty were less than enamored with this state of affairs. The Canal Zone became a point of bitter resentment. They felt that it was their country, the canal and all of the money derived from it should belong to Panama. They were the ones who had dug the canal, and they should own and operate it. This was the popular argument; unfortunately, it was not the case.

In point of fact, no Panamanian had so much as turned over a spade full of earth (McCullough 1977, 559). The upper class locals could not and would not demean

themselves as to take a job as a day laborer, and none were qualified as engineers, while the poor were physically incapable of doing such hard sustained labor. The actual building of the canal was done by Americans, Europeans, Chinese, Jamaicans, and Barbadans, many of whom stayed after the completion of the canal (McCullough 1977, 472).

The myth, however, is that it was a Panamanian effort and should belong to Panama. Between the myth and the very real economic disparity between those living and working in the Zone, and the average Panamanian, the anti-American feeling mounted through the 1950s and 60s.

The rise of strongman Omar Torrijos-Herrera, (who in an interview with Barbara Walters on American television), went so far as to threaten to blow up the Canal together with the election of Jimmy Carter to the Presidency of the United States, (who saw the Canal as an obstacle to better relations with all of Central and South America) led to the signing of the Carter-Torrijos Treaty.

The treaty signing and the dissolution of the Canal Zone which immediately went into effect, did little to ease the anti-American feeling. Indeed both Torrijos, who was killed in a plane crash within a year of the treaty signing, and his successor Manuel Noriega continued to stoke the fires of anti-American sentiment whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Economic sanctions and other actions directed toward the Noriega government did nothing to ease the tensions. It all came to a head in the spring of 1989 when Noriega refused to leave office following the democratic election of Guillermo Endara to

the presidency of Panama. The most vivid image of that election was of the newly elected vice president, Billy Ford, covered in the blood of his bodyguard (who died), being beaten by Noriega's thugs in the streets of Panama City.

The continued harassment, especially of American servicemen and their families continued throughout the summer and fall of that year. Finally with the murder of a Marine Crop officer, and the assault of a Naval officer and his wife, President Bush ordered the implementation of Operation Just Cause.

With the arrest of Manuel Noriega, and the disbanding of the Panamanian Defense Force and the Dignity Battalions, which were little more than officially recognized street gangs, order was restored to Panama. The Endara government finally took office and began the work of restoring the nation as a democratic republic. The problem was that having been restored to his rightful place by the Americans, Endara's critics charged that he was little more than a puppet for the United States. The conventional wisdom of senior officers in USARSO as told to the author was that this meant that President Endara felt obliged to go out of his way to show that he was no one's puppet and so did as little as he could to cooperate with any and all American suggestions or requests.

As the number of Cuban rafters swelled Guantanamo Naval Base and the tensions between Cubans and Haitians began to emerge, someone thought it would be a good idea to move the Haitians to some safe haven, and Panama came to mind. Why Panama? When one considers the depth of anti-American feeling by the populace, why indeed? Yet Panama had a number of points to its advantage; the first point being that

there was a military presence consisting of over ten thousand service members representing all branches in the country. The second was that there was enough land under military control to provide a safe haven for ten thousand migrants. And lastly, as unwanted and unloved as the US military might be in Panama, that same military brought over six thousand jobs to Panamanians who would otherwise be making a third of the wage paid by the US. It also provided six million dollars in aid in 1994, and was to be increase to eight million in 1995. And this did not include the money spent by US service members and their families (Statistical Abstract of the United States 1997, 798).

It was hoped that those members of the Panamanian Assembly who saw the US presence as beneficial to their nation's economy would be willing to support the establishment of a safe haven. The Endara government was enjoying its last days in office. His political party had been badly defeated by the old party of Manuel Noriega, under the presidential candidacy of Ernesto Perez-Balladares who was nicknamed "Toro" (which means bull in Spanish) because of his imposing size and charismatic presence. President Endara, being in no mood to do last minute favors for the US, referred the matter to the lame duck Panamanian assembly, which was fairly divided between those who hated the United States and those who saw the US presence as a reliable cash cow for the Republic (Recollection of the author).

When it came to the idea of allowing the US to bring in Haitians, however, the assembly showed remarkable unity. The answer was a resounding, no. In doing so the Panamanian assembly was reflecting the mind of their constituency. The local papers had been filled with articles, opinions, and political cartoons expressing the attitude and

fears of the Panamanian people regarding the Haitians. Haitian equaled HIV/AIDS. Panama had its own problem with HIV/AIDS; they did not want it made worse by Haitians escaping from American control (Recollection of the author from reading the Panamanian Press).

The Haitians would not be safe havened in Panama, but the idea of using Panama as a safe haven did not go away. In August of 1994, President Ernesto Perez-Balladares was inaugurated. For Americans living in Panama, especially for service members stationed in Panama, there was a certain anxiety that accompanied his inauguration. Mr. Balladares belonged to the old Noriega political party and many Panamanians had voted for him because they hoped to see a return of what amounted to an open season on Americans. The military had been a prime target for harassment and the military expected to see a return to the bad old days.

President Balladares, however, wanted to be seen as someone with a vision for Panama's future, rather than someone who would fall back on the recent past. As a result, the old Noriega cronies who had been enjoying an unwanted retirement did not return to Panama City, but stayed in retirement; and "Toro" Balladares looked for an opportunity to show Bill Clinton that he had a friend in Panama City. On the third of September 1994, with the approval of the President, the government of Panama agreed to accept up to 10,000 Cubans for a period not to exceed six months. On the eighth of September, the first Cubans landed at Howard Air Force Base.

CHAPTER 2

THE OPERATION

Preparation for the migrants arrival had been going on for weeks prior to the first Cubans arrival from Guantanamo. It has been taken as a foregone conclusion that the Government of Panama would permit the arrival of Cubans (as opposed to Haitians). To that end, SOUTHCOM in general, and USARSO in particular, had gone into high gear.

The Joint Task Force was formed, a commander and staff appointed, camp sites identified, and staff meetings called, as the various players in the forthcoming piece were gradually identified and tasks developed. The Chaplain resource manager represented the chaplaincy at these meetings while the senior chaplains wrestled with the question of who was to be named Task Force Chaplain.

At the same time the process of procurement was also moving into high gear. The author was informed by the budget analysis for the Chaplain, Ms. Zulay Stanisiola, that a separate fund cite had been established providing eight million dollars for the operation. Everyone identified as a contracting officer in the Southern Command was hand carrying purchase requests from one finance office to another in order to expedite the purchase of everything from running shoes to rosaries.

Yet we never saw an operations plan (OPLAN). The assumption was that the OPLAN developed for the Haitians had been adopted for the Cubans, but no one knew for sure. In conversations with Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Noble who was the executive officer for the Military Police Command, he recalled that the great frustration for the military police was the lack of an overall plan for the operation. This meant that

each organization was left to develop an internal OPLAN based on the situations and their internal standard operating procedures (SOPs). Not that anyone was in doubt as to what needed to be done.

The purpose of Operation Safe Haven, in spite of the benign name, was to continue the detainment of up to 10,000 Cuban migrants for six months to relieve the pressure of the population at Guantanamo Bay. In everything but name, the migrants were prisoners of the United States Government. They were being detained for illegally trying to enter the US without permission or authority. The Cubans were prisoners, and the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen of the Southern Command were to be their jailers. This was not a duty most military personnel would seek and it was a duty that would create a great deal of ambivalence among the soldiers in the camps.

It is understandable that General Barry M. McCaffrey sought to make it something other than it was. From the beginning of Safe Haven, the influence of the SOUTHCOM Commander in Chief (CinC), was felt by everyone in the operation. General McCaffery had assumed command in June of 1994. A highly decorated hero of the Vietnam War who carried the visible scars of that conflict, McCaffery had successfully led the 24th Infantry Division during the Gulf War. A book *Prodigal Soldiers* by James Kitfield identified the CinC as one of the leaders who had transformed and redeemed the Army from a dispirited hollow force following the Vietnam War to the highly professional Army that brought about the decisive victory in Desert Storm. *Prodigal Soldiers* became mandatory reading for Army officers in the Southern Command (Kitfield 1995, 24).

General McCaffrey was also known as a hard taskmaster ruthlessly dedicated to mission accomplishment. To that end, he thought nothing of burning out his staff, bulldozing subordinates and shooting the messenger. As a number of staff officers related to the author in counseling, to be on the SOUTHCOM Staff was to pray for the day you could leave it, hopefully with one's career still intact.

The first message received from the CinC was that the Cubans were to be treated as our guests with courtesy and respect and that the military members would share the discomfort of our guests in that the military members assigned to duty in the camps would stay there throughout the operation.

The morale of those who were about to be involved immediately began to decline. Morale was especially low for soldiers stationed at Fort Clayton across the Panama Canal from Camp Number One as many of these soldiers could literally see their quarters or barracks from the Camp.

Additionally, because Operation Safe Haven was to involve the entire SOUTHCOM community, the community should do everything it could to welcome the migrants. Family members were encouraged to provide baked goods, and to collect clothing and other items that could be of use to the migrants.

The Command message portrayed the migrants as true refugees from a repressive regime who had left everything to seek freedom in the United States. They were victims of a policy change, which had been deemed necessary by the administration. They were guilty of nothing more. Furthermore, in the process of making the dangerous crossing to Florida, they had lost what little else they might have in the world with the result that

they were coming with just the clothes on their backs. It was classic Cold War rhetoric. However, as products of the Cold War, the community responded to this message. There was enormous sympathy for the plight of the migrants in spite of all evidence to the contrary.

The reality was otherwise. At one point during the summer, the author was watching the Cable News Network (CNN) (which was carried on the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS)--Panama) was covering the migration. A Coast Guard cutter that had CNN reporters on board came upon a boat full of Cubans. As the Coast Guard prepared to bring the migrants on board the ship, one of the CNN reporters called out to the boat: "Why do you want to come to the US?" If the reporter or anyone else was expecting to hear the words, "freedom" or "libertad," they were to be disappointed. The one word response from the Cubans was "Money."

On 8 September, the first 94 Cubans arrived at Howard Air Force Base via two C130 military transport planes. To quote the Joint Task Force Panama After Action Report: "the influx of the Cuban nationals went on steadily through 27 October 1994 when the Cuban Safe Haven population reached its peak of 8,699 migrants" (JTF AAR, 6). When the first of the Cuban migrants arrived at Howard Air Force Base, they were greeted with the fanfare usually associated with homecoming heroes. The USARSO Army Band played, speeches of welcome were given, and the atmosphere was that of anticipation and hope filled expectation.

Once the ceremonies were over, the migrants were then taken through the Reception Center where they were identified, enrolled in the Deployable Mass

Identification and Tracking System (DMPITS) data base, medically screened, and prepared for transportation to one of the community sites. At the same time, the migrants were given clothing, toiletries, the New Testament in Spanish, rosaries, cigarettes for those who smoked (and it was soon discovered that the entire adult population on the island of Cuba is addicted to nicotine), and a brand new pair of running shoes. While going from station to station, the migrants were offered sandwiches, cookies, brownies, and other baked goods provided by military family members, and coffee and kool-aid from the dining facilities. Once the inprocessing was completed the migrants got on buses for the ride to the camps.

The buses taking the migrants to the camps on the Bruja (witch in Spanish) Road would pass two key places that would come to have meaning for the migrants in the months to come, Camp Rousseau, and Contractors Hill. Prior to Safe Haven, Camp Rousseau's had served as Range Control for Empire Range. When in July it was thought that a Safe Haven would be established for Haitians, Rousseau had been the initial site for the first camp. In fact, the Support Battalion had constructed floors and set up tents in preparation for the Haitians arrival. All their work was taken apart when the Panamanian government refused to admit them.

Now the four bubble-like structures would serve as the Joint Information Bureau where the press would be accredited, "briefed, supported and scheduled for field visits to the airfield reception station and community sites" (JTF-Safe Haven Press Kit, 38). Camp Rousseau was also the site of the Cuban Family Support Center serving as a control point of contact for visitors seeking to contact people in the camps. As well as

an information center where representatives of other government agencies (such as Immigration and Naturalization Service), and non-government organizations would be present to advise, assist, and process requests within their area of expertise. In addition, the Cuban Family Support Center served as a coordination center for volunteer support and donations. The Cuban migrants, especially those with relatives in the United States, would come to know this place well over the next five months.

The second place was Contractors Hill, which served as the control point for the four camps. Only those assigned to, or having business in the camps would be allowed to go past this point. To quote an article from the *Army Times*: “The effort required to turn this strip of jungle into a small city with a water supply, road network and electricity was nothing short of Herculean. . . . ‘US troops have poured enough concrete here to build an eight-mile, two-lane road.’ Said Captain Scott Bulmer, of Joint Task Force Safe Haven” (October 17, 1994, 13).

The layout for each camp was essentially the same. In an area enclosed by chain link fence “each camp was divided into ten blocks of up to eighteen tents with up to fourteen migrants per tent.” In the middle of each camp was a large rectangular area containing a playing area (for soccer), a recreation area/tent, and religious area/tent. Also within each camp was a dining area (with food catered by a restaurant in Panama City), shower points, and portable toilets. Additionally there was a reception area and medical aid station in every camp. A camp headquarters (enclosed by chain link fence), served as an entry control point (CALL, Appendix B-2).

From the same article in the *Army Times*:

Despite the military's best efforts, however conditions are less than ideal. The dusty pathways in the camps became muddy rivers during the daily rains. And while military officials insist that the Cubans are not prisoners, the high fences surrounding the camps, and the military police who patrol regularly, are constant reminders that the Cubans are not free to come and go as they please." (October 17, 1994, 13)

This did not mean, however, that no one tried to leave. Within hours of the first group of migrants' arrival at Camp Number One, two of them literally went over the wall or in this case the fence. They were not gone long. The jungle, which was less than one hundred meters from the camp quickly hid them from anyone who, might have seen them go. But they also found, as people will who have never spent time in the jungle, that it is a dark and disorienting place. The jungle floor is slick and damp and hilly. A person can quickly find themselves slipping down a ravine with nothing to reach out for except a black palm tree with its two-inch spikes ready to puncture your hand.

And then there are the snakes; Bushmasters, Anacondas, and Fer d'lance. As soldiers were informed during their week of in-processing the latter is known as a "two stepper." Two steps after it bites you, you are dead. According to what the escapees told the M.P.s when they made their way back to Camp Number One, they had come upon some big snakes (probably Bushmasters) and decided to go back. However, there would be other attempts throughout the length of the operation.

To solve the problem of pathways turning into mud, the engineers brought in tons of crushed rock to create sidewalks where people could walk and stay relatively dry after the daily rainfall. In retrospect, many would wonder if it might not have been wiser to simply pour more concrete.

The desired end state was the stability of the camps. To quote the Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Initial Observations: Migrant Camp Operations: Panama/Cuba May 1995:*

Objectives of camp administration were: (1) help the migrants by alleviating their suffering while they awaited determination of their future status, (2) provide for the security and safety of both the migrants and the soldiers by maintaining proper order and discipline within the camps. Both of these objectives were closely linked and were best accomplished by ensuring that the migrants physical, spiritual, and moral needs were met. (CALL, I-6)

This may have been the intent, however the beauty of lessons learned and after action reports is that like hindsight, the vision is always 20/20. It could well be argued that the unreal expectation built into the first objective: ("Help the migrants by alleviating their suffering while they awaited determination of their future") contributed to the events, which made the second bullet necessary.

Initially the emphasis for dealing with the migrants was on the issues regarding their misfortune. Once again, with the very best of intentions migrant suffering was identified with the lack of the necessities, which were immediately addressed both through the issuance of shoes and clothing and the further issuing of donated clothing from the people in the military community. Gradually the migrants began to contact their relatives in the United States. Not surprisingly those families began to come down to Panama to see their loved ones, and, not surprisingly those family members brought not only additional clothing, but toiletries, personal items and luxuries-radios, Walkman radio and CD players, and in some cases small television sets. As the chaplain in the camps observed, there began to be an understandable disparity between those migrants

with relatives and friends in the US and those who did not bringing a new twist to the old cliché of the haves and the have-nots.

The growing disparity emphasized a fact that had been lost in the process of trying to deal with this mass of humanity, these were individuals, each with his or her own history and agenda, and nothing was going to change that. For the UMTs assigned to the camps this awareness would cause them to shift away from programs per se (allowing the Cubans to shape the programs to their own needs) and allow the chaplains and assistants to adopt a one on one approach to ministry (Interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

Try as those in charge of JTF-Safe Haven might to create communities within the camps, their efforts were frustrated by the reality of the situation. There was no community. The migrants had not fled Cuba with a common purpose or a common goal. They had left their homeland as individuals each with his or her own agenda. The only thing binding them together was their desire to get into the United States. Beyond this goal, their ties to one another were merely those of a common birthplace. The true suffering of the migrants was in the frustration of not being allowed into the US.

Unfortunately, the desire on the part of the military to meet the needs of the migrants sent mixed messages. On the one hand, there was the official message that they would not be allowed to enter the United States. On the other hand, the migrants were being offered classes in English as a Second Language, there were personnel from the US Immigrant and Naturalization Service taking information, vocational training (the skills need to find jobs in the US), family reunification, and family visitation from the

US Is it any wonder that the migrants did not believe the official message. This was not merely a question of a group of people being in denial, but a sub-textual reality which appeared to be saying to them: do not worry, have hope, you will get to Miami, or Union City, or New York. Have hope. Actions denied the words in the official position and the paradox engendered further frustration. (Author's interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

Another frustration of equal importance was in the area of communication. Some of this was because only two of the military camp commanders could speak Spanish enabling them to speak directly to the migrant camp leaders. But even in those situations where translators were required, the leadership of both the military and the migrants were not concerned about the same things.

As the CALL *Initial Observations: Migrant Camp Operations* points out: "Examples of the types of issues that (migrant) camp leaders voiced during the camp leaders meeting include:

1. Concerns about delays with migrant parole processing.
2. Displeasure with the quality or quantity of rations.
3. Requests for on-site medical screenings (for immigrations) within the camps.
4. Requests for wrestling mats or other athletic equipment and supplies.
5. Leaky tents, poor drainage, power outages.
6. Requests for materials to support art and craft activities.
7. Safety of woman and children in the camp.
8. Overcrowded conditions in the camp (too many migrants per tent).

9. Requests for calculators for camp leaders. (CALL 1995, I-16)

Examples of topics that were likely to be introduced by military camp leaders include:

1. Establishing the migrant chain of command
2. Living conditions
3. Elections
4. Education programs
5. Religious services
6. Recreational programs
7. Vocational-technical training
8. Recent issues and incidents (CALL 1995, I-17)

With the exception of recreation and issues regarding living conditions in the camp (which were shared by the soldiers working in the camps), the leadership--military and migrant--was communicating at cross purposes.

The migrants were addressing their determination to get to the US from Panama, the military was addressing the present reality. No doubt to the migrants, it seemed that the military leadership was not listening, but this was not true. The military was listening, but the job of the military was and is to carry out national policy, which was to provide a safe haven for the migrants in Panama.

Yet there were situations that arose and needed to be addressed, one of which was brought to the attention of the Staff Chaplain's Office. Within days of the arrival of the first women and children (the first flights having been made up of single males), it

was found that one of the women was in a very advanced stage of pregnancy. This was not supposed to have happened. Directions from higher had been that pregnant women were not to be sent to Panama. Supposedly all the women had been screened. But here was this young woman, with her husband, in her eighth month, having complications (and just to make things more interesting, she was a chain-smoker as well).

This situation started to take on international implications. After all if the child was born in Panama during the course of this operation, what would this child be in terms of citizenship; Panamanian, Cuban, or American? Panama was saying the child would not be Panamanian, while the State Department was saying the child would not be an American, and that no passport would be granted by the US Embassy.

The parents were hoping the mother would be taken to the US to have the baby because if the baby was born in the US it would be a citizen and the parents would be allowed to stay. In the end, her complications were serious enough to require that she be medically evacuated to the Brook Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where the baby was born, a citizen of the United States of America. In the minds of the Cubans, it was a victory for their side. The paper walls could be torn.

Their next victory would come in November of 1994 when the first "parolees," totaling thirty-nine in all, were flown to the States. The parolees were made up of elderly people, age seventy and older who were chronically ill, and their caregivers. Those people having relatives in the US were paroled to their families. Shortly thereafter unaccompanied young people with families in the US began to be identified for parole as well. It was another victory for the migrants.

Colonel Robert Patton, an Army War College Research Fellow conducted a study entitled "*A Study of Operation Safe Haven: Caring for Cuban Migrants in the Republic of Panama from September 1994 through February 1995*" shortly after the operation states in his study: 'While in theory it is nice to expect nothing but cordial behavior from people the US Military is entrusted to care for, the reality is that any group of people penned up for an extended period of time, with no certainty of what the future holds for them, is likely to exhibit some type of antisocial attitudes.' On 30 October 1994, approximately one hundred fifty migrants at Camp Three took part in a civil disturbance during which twenty migrants left the camp without authorization. Within a short period of time the migrants were found or came back on their own, but as a result there would be a heightened level of security established in all of the camps. (Van Laar 1995, 3)

Around 1700 on the evening of 7 December 1994, 500 Cubans in Camp One began picking up the rocks that had been placed in the camps so that people would not have to walk in the mud and began to throw them at the unarmed soldiers on the other side of the fence. Some 200 Cubans then commandeered a food services truck belonging to NIKKOS Restaurant, the caterer, and crashed it through the gates of the enclosure. Once they were outside the camp itself, they smashed the windows of two trucks and a van, and then demanded to speak to officials from the US Embassy (interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

Camp authorities, backed by the military police, were able to block the migrants advance and promised to consider their grievances. After much listening to the pent-up frustration and the laundry list of grievances and after even more coaxing and cajoling, the military camp leadership got the Cubans to go back into the camp.

The next morning, however, before any action could be taken to address anything, the Cubans had breakfast and began to build a barricade across the as yet to be rebuilt gate to the enclosure.

Chaplain Jacobs and Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Noble, the Executive Officer for the Military Police Command, recounted to the author, that at approximately 0900, the rock throwing began again and the military police prepared to quell the disturbance. The barrage of rocks continued as more and more of the migrants got in on the action. The protective gear worn by the M.P.s, plexiglas shields and face guards proved to be inadequate against two and three pound rocks. The "Cuban rock concert" as the soldiers would later come to call it continued on and off throughout the morning.

As it was told to the author at the time of the incident by those military police involved, shortly after noon, more than a thousand Cubans rushed the gates, fleeing the camps, vandalizing and assaulting as many soldiers as they could on their way. Some of the Cubans seized two Humvees and began driving after soldiers. Four soldiers were deliberately chased until they were run over. Only the terrain which slowed the speed of the vehicles, and the high wheel-base of the "hummers" kept the soldiers from greater damage, although three would suffer broken limbs and the fourth a broken hip. All four received head injuries as well.

While many of the fleeing migrants ran up the Bruja Road toward Contractors Hill (where they would be stopped), other rioters ran in the other direction toward Camp 2 where they attempted to free their compaños. Unbeknownst to the military camp leadership, the instigators of the riot had phoned their compadres at Camp 2 telling them to be ready to escape because there would be a riot in the morning (author's interview with LTC Noble).

In the meantime, a call had been put into the Military Police Command requesting that every available MP on the east bank of the canal be sent to the West bank to restore order in the camp. At the same time, Gorgas Army Hospital on Ancon Hill near Quarry Heights, the SOUTHCOM Headquarters was being overwhelmed with injured soldiers who were being medivaced from the site of the riots. The lobby, the clinics, the solarium were filled with soldiers, many with face, head, leg and arm injuries from the rocks, others from having been cut by pieces of Army cots that had been flattened and sharpened by the migrants. The four soldiers who had been run over were among the most seriously injured. On the West bank of the canal, MPs and soldiers closed off the Bruja road and began to contain the thousand or more Cubans who had run off and to restore order to Camp One site of the riot, and Camp Two. While at the same time, security at the other two camps was tightened.

As evening came, those who had fled (especially those who had gone into the jungle) realized that they had nowhere to go and made their way back to the camp. Ironically, after having destroyed a number of facilities as they fled the camp (including the dining facility) the returning migrants demanded to know when they would be fed. By night-fall, all but 40 would have returned to the camp. However, in many ways, they still held the camp and the next day appeared as if it would be a repeat of the previous afternoon's events. Yet while the migrants slept or planned for their next demonstration in force, the Army was preparing to do what it has historically done best--take and hold ground.

The evening of 8 December, two light infantry battalions were deployed from the Atlantic side of the isthmus. The 5th Battalion, 87th Infantry, the last infantry battalion left in Panama, which, was stationed at Fort Davis and was due to be deactivated in June of 1995; and the elite 2nd of the 75th Ranger Battalion from Fort Lewis, Washington. They were in Panama doing jungle warfare training at the Jungle Operations Training Center at Fort Sherman, also on the Atlantic side.

In the early morning hours of the 9th of December, the two battalions joined the soldiers of the Military Police Command. All were now armed; live ammunition had been issued and had been loaded. The MPs with riot guns, the Rangers and light fighters with M-16s, their bayonets fixed. The mission was simple, to take control of the camp and arrest the instigators and those who had gone out of their way to attack soldiers and vandalize property. The Military Police were able to identify the perpetrators because throughout the course of the rock throwing the evening before and during the riot that took place on the morning of the 8th of December, they had videotaped the individuals who were taking part in the event. Between the videotapes and eyewitnesses, the MPs knew who to take into custody (author's interview with LTC Noble). With complete professionalism and remarkable restraint given the events of the last forty-eight hours, this is exactly what they did. Armed men, with bayonets and shotguns who clearly communicate by their body language that they will brook no argument, are clearly a deterrence to further violence.

Two hundred thirty-six soldiers were injured; twenty-five of whom were hospitalized. Nineteen Cubans were hospitalized, some of them with birdshot wounds to

the legs. Two of the forty Cubans missing at the end of the day on 8 December, would be found dead in the Panama Canal by members of the Panamanian National Police (PNP). After the bodies were turned over to US authorities, it was determined that the two men had drowned while attempting to swim to the eastern side of the Canal. These were the only fatalities. Rumors spread among some family members that as many as six soldiers had been killed in the riot. However, this was only rumor (author's recollection).

Gradually over the next several days, the missing migrants were either found or returned to the camp on their own. The thirty-eight escapees along with those identified as instigators and rioters who had been intent on harming soldiers were placed in the small detention facility at Camp Four. This facility had been built to house those migrants who turned out to be criminals. Thieves, people who sought to resolve issues through conflict, and spouse/child abusers were removed from the communities and placed in the detention area. However, with the influx of rioters, the detention facility was soon stressed beyond its maximum capacity. The 536th Engineers from Fort Kobbe, who had been brought in to assist in providing security under the new situation, were able to construct an enlarged facility within a matter of days (Van Laar, 4).

The riots changed everything, but especially the command focus, which was now on security. The most dramatic change was to the physical structure of the camps themselves. To quote Major VanLaar's article once again: "Safe Haven camps were designed to resemble hasty base camps . . . physical security was not a prime consideration in the design and construction of these camps. A fence line was provided

primarily to define the limits of the camp area, not to order or contain the residents. The top guard on the fence was positioned to deter invaders not escapees. No towers or concertina wire were used." VanLaar adds: "It was not until after the riots that towers and concertina wire were put up to protect US Forces from future riots" (Van Laar 1995, 4). Military Police walking the perimeter were now armed, if not necessarily with a side arm, then at the very least with a mattox handle.

Needless to say, there were no more cookies and brownies coming forth from the wives of soldiers for the Cubans. The day after the riot, Major General George Crocker, the commander of USARSO, and members of his extended staff (the chaplain resource manager represented the Installation Chaplain's Office and witnessed the event) met with the family member support leaders and concerned spouses to address the state of the mission and the future safety of their military spouses. It was a difficult meeting for the General, who in actuality had little to do with the day to day operation of the camp.

The wives were furious. Not only did they feel betrayed by the Cubans who had just spit on their acts of kindness by attacking their husband--completely without cause or provocation, but the wives were really angry with the command who they felt had set their unarmed soldier and/or husbands up for attack. If left to those women that afternoon there would have been blood running into the Canal, flowing toward both seas.

Major General Crocker assured the wives that the "days of Mr. Nice Guy" were over. The migrants would be locked down for the remainder of their time in Panama. Visitations would be denied, recreational and/or vocational opportunities cut-off, the daily two packages of cigarettes per adult migrant would stop. Basically Crocker said

they would eat, sleep, and wait until they were returned to Guantanamo and none of them would ever see the shores of the United States. In short, he told them what they wanted to hear and they went away somewhat mollified (author's recollection).

The reality, of course, was otherwise and the truth changed. Within two weeks, the command message changed. The new command message was that most had been innocent of participation in the incident. The worst offenders were in custody and it would not be right to punish the many for the acts of the few. No one believed this for a minute; over a thousand migrants had been part of the "rock concert." The same number of people had fled the camps and now the SOUTHCOM and/or USARSO community was being asked to believe that the riots had all been the work of 455 troublemakers and instigators who were in all likelihood agents of Fidel Castro. It did not sell (author's recollection).

Within two weeks, all of the programs that had been in place before the riots, had been restored and were ongoing. Phone lines were restored, family visits were reinstated, outside groups and agencies could visit the enclosures once more. The only real penalty imposed upon the Cubans appeared to be that the daily cigarette ration had been cut from two packs per adult, per day, to a single pack issued with the evening meal. In truth, however, the actual reason for the cutback as related by the Finance Office was that SOUTHCOM could not afford to keep paying \$50,000 a week for cigarettes.

Along with the physical structure of the camps, there was a restructuring of the security posture and the rules of engagement (ROE). Additional forces were also

deployed from the United States for the specific purpose of providing security for the camps. As Major VanLaar notes in his article: "At the outset, there was no armor capability in theater. After the riots, the 8th Engineer Battalion (from the 5th Infantry Division as Fort Polk, Louisiana) was deployed specifically for the M113 armored personnel carriers it had in its inventory. The impact of the armored M113s on the migrants was dramatic" (Van Laar 1995, 3).

At the same time, an Air Assault Battalion from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, was also deployed for the duration of the operation. To augment the Military Police Command, which had been redesignated the Joint Security Brigade, military police companies from Fort Campbell and Fort Lewis, Washington were also deployed to Panama for the length of the operation. Throughout the last of December and on into January, a sense of rhythm was restored to the camps. The heightened security was evident, but within the enclosures, business went on apace. The only change noticed by the SOUTHCOM community was in the Horoko Housing area where several times a week, the 92nd Military Police Battalion would rehearse their quick response and riot control procedures.

A by-product of the riots was the attitude of the Panamanian population to the event. The coming of the Cubans had been seen by the people of Panama as an attempt by the new administration of President Ernesto Perez-Balladares to establish good relations with the Clinton administration. As a European diplomat quoted in the *New York Times* observed: "This idea of taking in the Cubans was Perez-Balladares' way of telling Bill Clinton that Washington has a friend in Panama City." The same article goes

on: "While public opinion surveys indicated that well over half of Panamanians opposed allowing the Cubans to come, President Perez agreed to accept them provided he receive two guarantees: that the Cubans would not be allowed off the bases and that all Cubans were to be moved to another country within six months" (December 10, 1994, 18).

"The escape from the camps showed Panamanians that the first guarantee was not foolproof and now many doubted that all Cuban refugees will be gone by the six month deadline." One Panamanian official said, "We don't know what the Americans are going to do with these refugees and I don't think the Americans know either" (*New York Times*, "Panama Camps are Calm but 40 Cubans Missing," 10 December 1994, 18).

But the Americans did know. The Cubans were going back to Guantanamo (GITMO). With the successful transition of power in Haiti, made possible by Operation Restore Hope, many of the Haitians had been repatriated to that nation. In short, there was now room at GITMO. With the Cubans having worn out their welcome in Panama, which felt almost as betrayed as the family members of SOUTHCOM, it was time to begin the removal of the Cubans from Panama. Throughout the month of January, JTF Safe Haven began to get ready to reverse the process and send the migrants back to GITMO.

The major question was what about the "recalcitrants," those who had led the riots and other antisocial acts? The one thing everyone agreed on was that these individuals would not be returned with the other migrants and would, in fact, continue to be separated from their countrymen upon return to Guantanamo. It was first suggested that the recalatrants be returned by sea. Aside from any satisfaction that might come

from watching them become wretchedly sea sick, this plan was rejected as taking too long (four days as opposed to two hours by air). Having decided that returning the recalatrants by air was the only real option, the Joint Security Brigade called upon the US Marshal Service for guidance in transporting prisoners by air. After a week of training by members of the US Marshals team that deals with prisoner transport daily, the JSB was ready to conduct the process on 10 February 1995.

Transfer of the rest of the Cuban population began on the 4th of February 1995 when Camp Four was outprocessed and flown to GITMO. The population of Camp Three had been returned on the 9th and Camp Two on the 15th of February. At the same time, the first of the units began their return to home station on the 13th of February. By the 15th of March, 1995, all of the Cubans were back at Guantanamo and all of the units were back at Fort Campbell, Fort Polk, Fort Lewis, and Fort Bragg.

The campsites were empty, fences and wire gone, the tents and much of the equipment had been sent to Guantanamo. With the exception of the concrete pads, which would soon be removed, and the notorious rock paths marking the walkway, there was no trace of the operation. There was only the jungle waiting to take back its own.

CHAPTER 3

THE MINISTRY

It has been noted in chapter 2 that religious support was part of the operation from the outset. To treat it separately is in some ways an artificial construct, but in other ways a separate chapter on the ministry is a more accurate reflection of the Chaplaincy's role within the US Army.

The Chaplaincy is viewed as something apart, something other. Now this is not to say the Chaplaincy is unwelcome, with rare exceptions the chaplain is a most welcome part of the unit. In the eyes of many senior leaders chaplains do good things for soldiers and their families. There are commanders who consider their chaplains to be force multipliers within their brigades or battalions. As a brigade chaplain the author heard a battalion commander tell the brigade commander that his battalion chaplain was "my secret weapon." Yet what chaplains do is not what the rest of the Army does, we are "other." In the combat arms this can roughly be translated as: it is human, it is messy, I can't kill it. Get someone to deal it. Get the chaplain." This may sound facetious but it is the truth.

To understand the ministry of Chaplaincy that was provided over the course of Operation Safe Haven, one needs to understand the role of the chaplain and the ministry team. According to Army Regulation (AR) 161-1 and Field Manual (FM) 16-1: "The chaplain serves on the special staff with direct access to the commander. As a staff officer, the chaplain advises the commander and staff on matters of religion, morals, and morale. This advise includes not only the religious needs of the soldiers, but also the

moral, ethical, and humanitarian aspects of command policy" (FM 16-1, Chapters 1-3).

Furthermore: "The commander provides religious support through the Ministry Team (MT) which consists of at least one chaplain and one chaplain assistant . . . religious activities of the MT include *worship* (services, rites, ceremonies, sacraments and ordinances), *pastoral care* (visitation, ministry of presence, counseling, family life support, and the care of wounded or dying soldiers), *religious education*, and *spiritual fitness training*" (italics mine) (FM 16-1, Chapter 1-1).

United States Code, Title 10, Sections 3073, 3547, and 3581 which establishes the presence of chaplains in the military prescribes opportunities for worship as the principal function of the Chaplaincy. This emphasis on worship is a direct reflection of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States which says: "that congress shall make no laws establishing, *nor prohibiting* the free exercise of religion"(italics mine). More than anything else, the military chaplain is charged with protecting the "free exercise of religion" clause of the Constitution of the United States.

The chaplain is assisted in carrying out his/her duties by an enlisted service member who is either in the Military Operational Specialty (MOS) 71 M, or assigned to the task as a special duty. In the Army, they carry the title of Chaplain Assistant, in other branches of service they are referred to as Chapel Specialists. In wartime the Chaplain Assistant provides security for the ministry team (by regulation, chaplains may not carry weapons); in garrison, the assistant's tasks are administrative. At all times, the assistant is the eyes and ears of the chaplain. Frequently, the assistant as an enlisted member will hear things that a chaplain will not simply because there are matters soldiers will tell

another soldier that they will not say to an officer. A good Chaplain assistant is frequently a chaplains best tool for gauging the morale of a unit. Several Chaplain assistants were invaluable during Operation Safe Haven, most notably Staff Sergeant Jose Ortega and Specialist Rueben Reyes.

In late June 1994, the USARSO Command Chaplain was tasked to provide a religious support annex to the Operations Plan (OPLAN) for Joint Task Force - Safe Haven--Panama. This was the plan that called for the bringing of Haitian migrants to Panama. Chaplain (Colonel) David Goodwillie, the Command Chaplain for SOUTHCOM and USARSO was the author of the religious support annex. He also wrote the recommendation for the augmentation of personnel which as he would later recall: "We greatly underestimated. I was told to keep it realistic" (Goodwillie 1998, letter to the author). He continued: "The CinC's guidance was very succinct. 'I want those people, he said, 'to be treated the way I would want my grandmother treated.' Which is to say as guests, with respect and friendship" (Goodwillie, letter to the author). The Religious Support Appendix developed by Chaplain Goodwillie from the Haitian migrant safe haven, would be the only overall religious support plan developed by the Chaplaincy. It checked the block for the command which is to say that the plan was never decimated to the lower levels.

This is a curious phenomenon which seems to be unique to the Chaplains Corps. From the Chaplain Officer Basic Course on chaplains are taught the value of developing a religious support plan, and of getting it into the OPLAN of the unit, but where the chaplaincy consistently fails to follow-up is in seeing to it that subordinate chaplains and

ministry teams have a copy of the plan. The problem is that plans only work well when everyone knows what the plan is. The greater problem for the Chaplaincy is that too many chaplains only care about their own piece of the operation (i.e. their unit, battalion or brigade) and do not see themselves a part of the whole. The overall attitude is one of; “complete the religious support plan so that you can turn it into the S-3, and then get on with the *real* business of doing ministry.” This is what chaplains care about, doing ministry. It is also why those of us serving in Panama at the time, never noticed that we were operating without any knowledge as to what our senior chaplain had said we would be doing in the course of the coming operation.

As part of the Chaplaincy’s preparation for the Haitians Chaplain (Captain) Leon Kircher the Family Life Chaplain did an immediate religious needs assessment based on country study of Haiti. Chaplain Kircher also provided an information packet on the religious practice of Haiti to every ministry team in USARSO (author’s interview with Chaplain Kircher).

The most immediate problem was quickly identified as a need for Roman Catholic priests, preferably ones who were fluent in French or Creole (the Haitian dialect). USARSO had two priests in country, one on the Atlantic side at Fort Davis (Chaplain (Captain) Jim Betz) and one on the Pacific side at Fort Clayton (Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Paul Bolton) neither of whom spoke a word of French. There was also a need for chaplain assistants with these same linguistic skills. As Forces Command informed Chaplain Goodwillie, there was exactly one Creole speaking chaplain assistant

in the US Army and he was already at Guantanamo (author's interview with Chaplain Goodwillie).

The 193rd Infantry Brigade (Separate) had just been de-activated, the week before the start of the operation was announced. Colonel Garrison, the former commander of the 193rd was tasked to become the JTF Commander. He quickly assembled the remnants of his brigade staff: his executive officer, his adjutant, his operations and logistic officers, and his chaplain, Chaplain (MAJ) Robert Scruggs. According to CH Scruggs, the colonel was upset to find the Headquarters and Headquarters Company Commander absent from the meeting: "Where is my HHC Commander?" he demanded, "How can I proceed with this operation without my HHC Commander?"

"Sir," his XO replied, "You no longer have an HHC Commander. We deactivated. There is no HHC!" (author's interview with Chaplain Scruggs).

In the meantime, the soldiers of the 93rd Support Battalion along with their chaplain, Chaplain (CPT) Peter Fredrich were at Camp Rousseau building wooden platforms to provide flooring for the tents they were also setting up for the migrants. Chaplain Goodwillie went out to Camp Rousseau to observe the work in progress and to make his own assessment of the morale of the soldiers who were losing their Fourth of July holiday to do this work. Not surprisingly, the morale of the unit was high. Chaplain Fredrich pointed out that soldiers never mind working when they have a clear purpose and can see the result of their efforts.

The morale of the Chaplain Resource Manager who had accompanied Chaplain Goodwillie, however, took a nose dive when it was discovered that the plywood being

used to build the flooring platforms cost \$50,000. This was more than the USARSO chaplains entire appropriated budget for the next Fiscal Year (95). He would become even more discouraged when the Panamanian government refused to allow entrance to the Haitians and the platforms were taken apart and the plywood discarded. For the most part, however, the chaplains and ministry teams, along with the rest of USARSO breathed a collective sigh of relief when the JTF mission for the Haitians was stood down. The task had been overwhelming before it had even begun.

On 1 August 1994 however, SOUTHCOM was directed to resume planning to support migrant operations for Cubans and Haitians. The United States reentered negotiations with the government of Panama in hopes that the incoming administration of President Perez-Balladares would be willing to accept Cuban migrants into Panama. At the same time, the US also began to negotiate with the tiny country of Suriname (formerly Dutch Guyana) on the northern coast of South America to receive Haitian migrants.

With Safe Haven becoming a reality Chaplain Goodwillie defined his place in the operation. As he wrote to the author:

My role throughout the operation - which I pretty much defined for myself was to:

1. Balance our (limited) assets so the camps would be well served but unit, installation, and family programs would not be seriously degraded.
2. Personally support chaplains in the camps (follow-up on personnel actions, resolve issues with commanders, ensure they got the stuff needed, get them some R and R, awards, etc., at endex).
3. Coordinate with other services, I was on the phone regularly with all three chaplain branches "working deals." This really should have been done through joint channels and processes, but there was a lot of ad hoc 'get it done now' urgency going on. The implementation of joint doctrine either was not well

understood or too complicated and cumbersome. Probably both. (Goodwillie, letter to the author)

Chaplain Goodwillie's self-defined role was reflective of the situation at hand. He had to balance the "limited assets" because the CinC needed to maintain control of the situation. Unlike the situation during JTF Guantanamo, where the determination had been made that the scope of the operation could not be handled in-house, but would require additional chaplains and chaplain assistants.

Chaplain Goodwillie, like many of his peers (Chaplain (Colonel) Robert Hutcherson who was 10th Mountain Chaplain at the time of their deployment to both the HA following Hurricane Andrews and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia immediately comes to mind) was extremely proactive in personally supporting the Ministry Teams, as well as the individual chaplains and assistants who would deploy later. His office worked hard to obtain religious literature and supplies, establish contracts that would enable the UMTs to take soldiers on day trips and retreats, and to see to it that awards were given at the end of the operation (in the case of Safe Haven, the Humanitarian Service Medal).

Chaplain Goodwillie's observations on the difficulty of implementing joint doctrine is curious. He was one of the early authors of *Joint Pub 1-05 Religious Ministry Support for Joint Operations*. While at the War College, he did a thesis on the issue entitled: *Joint Doctrine for Ministry: Development and Directions*. He probably knew more on the subject than any other chaplain in country, but still couldn't get the system to work. His observations speak volumes as to the understanding of the term "joint" in 1994 and in many ways remains a question mark as we enter the next century.

In Panama the plan called for the construction of four camps. Two would be run by the Army while the Air Force and Navy would each run one of the other camps. The Air Force, through the Command Chaplains Office at Howard Air Force Base, began the process of mobilizing reserve chaplains to support the upcoming operation. The Navy was somewhat slower to respond. This was due in great part to the fact that the Naval Base at Rodman at the entrance to the Canal on the Pacific side had done away with their chaplain slot. Religious support to the sailors and marines stationed there was provided by the Air Force, or if they were unable to see the service member, the chaplains in the USARSO Command Chaplain's office would provide pastoral care or counseling (author's recollection).

The absence of a resident chaplain at Rodman slowed the process, but eventually a series of Navy reserve chaplains arrived in country to serve anywhere from two weeks to 90-day rotations. As a general rule, chaplain assistants did not deploy with the Navy chaplains and those slots were filled by Army chaplain assistants out of the USARSO Command Chaplain's office (author's recollection).

At the same time, a battalion sized Task Force was being assembled for deployment to Suriname to establish a camp there. This unit was made up of companies from the military police command, the 536 Engineers, 42nd Medical Support, and other support units. The Task Force Unit Ministry Team for Operation Distant Haven was Chaplain (Captain) Bruce Messinger and Specialist Frank Wharton. They would be joined by a Roman Catholic priest from the Forces Command Chaplains Office at Fort McPhearson, Georgia, Chaplain (Colonel) Kenneth Seifried. They would be gone for a

little over two months. During that time, Operation Uphold Democracy would take place in Haiti; and with the restoration of the Aristide government, Operation Distant Haven would be called off and the Task Force would gradually return to Panama (author's recollection).

In the Command Chaplains Office, the most immediate concern was contracting for the services of Spanish speaking Roman Catholic priests. Mrs. Mireya Olsen, the secretary for the Command Chaplain, was able to contact the Archdiocese of Panama through a Catholic permanent deacon who worked at SOUTHCOM on Quarry Heights. There was an identified need for four priests (one for each camp) but the hope was to contract six. As it turned out, there were three priests who would be willing to provide the sacraments on a part-time basis to the migrants including an elderly Cuban priest who had fled Cuba for Panama when Castro cracked down on the churches in the early sixties. He was most anxious to assist his fellow countrymen, but his health was not good.

The deacon from Quarry Heights then approached the Chaplain Resource Manager about the possibility of contracting permanent deacons to provide Catholic ministry in the camps. After consulting with Chaplain Goodwillie and his deputy, Chaplain (LTC) Mark Fentress, this solution was agreed to and the contracts were written (author's recollection).

While the primary concern was obtaining the services of Catholic clergy, it was also recognized that something would need to be done about Cuban migrants from the Protestant traditions. From information obtained from migrant operations at Guantanamo, the religious demographics identified 24 percent of the migrants as being

Roman Catholics, 24 percent as Protestant (from a number of traditions) with the remaining 52 percent as Jewish, other religions, or unchurched (Interview with Chaplain Goodwillie).

As the advisor to the commander on matters of religion, Chaplain Goodwillie informed the CinC of these demographics. There are times, however, when commanders will not be advised. In this case, General McCaffrey dismissed the notion that Cubans were anything other than Roman Catholic and he wanted to see Roman Catholic priests at work in the camps. In conversations with the Chaplain Resource Manager, Chaplain Scruggs stated repeatedly that the CinCs vehemence on this issue was being reflected by Brigadier General James Wilson the JTF commander. General Wilson would spend four of the six months of the operation steadfastly refusing to consider the contracting of Spanish speaking Protestant pastors from Panama for work on the camps. As the chaplains frequently reminded each other: "Chaplains can only advise" (author's recollection).

As soon as it became clear that the migrants coming to SOUTHCOM would be Cuban, it was also realized that this operation would have a higher profile and receive greater media coverage than had been anticipated for the Haitians. This led to Brigadier General Wilson's appointment as JTF Safe Haven Commander with Colonel Garrison serving as his deputy. In the Command Chaplains office there was some discussion among the senior chaplains as to who would be the JTF chaplain. When the former 193rd Infantry Brigade staff had been identified to head the operation in June, it had made sense to have the brigade chaplain take on the responsibility of supervising religious support.

But that had been late June and early July. Chaplain (Major) Scruggs had become the Fort Clayton, Protestant Pastor, and the profile of the operation, as well as the size of the operation was greater. It was felt that the senior chaplain needed to be a Lieutenant Colonel. This was due in part to the fact that a general officer was now the JTF commander; however it was also due to a concern as to what rank would be held by the Air Force and Navy chaplains. The slots called for chaplains in the rank of O-3, but there was some question as to whether those working the personnel issue for chaplains in the sister services were paying attention. Chaplain Goodwillie had by that time been informed that the Air Force chaplain in Suriname was a very unhappy O-5. The thinking was that the more senior the JTF chaplain the less cause for distress among the services. As it happened the concern would be justified (author's interview with Chaplain Goodwillie).

The problem was that there were only three chaplain O-5s in Panama. Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Fentress, the deputy command chaplain, Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Neil Frey, the Protestant Pastor for the Atlantic community at Forts Davis and Espinar, and Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Paul Bolton the Roman Catholic pastor for the Pacific side. Chaplains Frey and Bolton were clearly needed where they were, which left Chaplain Fentress. Except that Fentress had just been selected to be the Division Chaplain for the First Infantry Division, then at Fort Riley, Kansas. He was to go there in December. If he were named JTF Chaplain, he would have to be extended until March of 1995 at the earliest. The division chaplain slot would go to someone else, and his chances for making full colonel diminished (author's interview with Chaplain

Goodwillie). Chaplain Goodwillie named Chaplain Scruggs to be the JTF Chaplain while at the same time remaining the Post Protestant Pastor for Fort Clayton.

The first chaplain identified to serve at Camp One was Chaplain (MAJ) Carolyn Jacobs. She received this dubious distinction simply by virtue of having arrived in Panama in mid-August. Somehow the fact that USARSO was in the midst of a draw-down had gone unnoticed by Chaplain Personnel Management. As a result, Chaplain Jacobs arrived to fill a slot that no longer existed, on paper or in fact. However, with the commencement of Operation Safe Haven, Chaplain Jacobs became the first choice for Camp Pastor for Camp One. Chaplain Jacobs would be assisted by Staff Sergeant Jose Ortega, who was originally from Panama and whose insights, as well as his linguistic skills, would prove invaluable.

As fate would have it, Chaplain Jacobs was the first chaplain General McCaffrey saw when he came to inspect Camp One, after the first of the migrants arrived. His immediate response as she recalled was: "Your not a Catholic priest! I told them I wanted Catholic priests!" He then went off to find someone to whom he could make his displeasure known (author's interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

When Chaplain Jacobs reported to Camp One to meet with the staff of the 42nd Forward Support Battalion which would be responsible for the camp, she was given a briefing on the concept of the operation and the proposed lay out of the camp. When she asked: "Where will the chapel be located?" She received that look that said: "Chapel?" So she pressed the issue: "Weren't we going to put in a chapel?" Clearly this had not

been on the board, but a site was selected and chapels became part of the normal camp layout.

When the first ninety-four Cubans arrived, Chaplain Jacobs and Staff Sergeant Ortega elected not to greet them at Howard Air Force Base, but to position themselves at the Camp issuing point where the Cubans drew sheets, blankets, towels, shower shoes, and other items for their new quarters. The UMT quickly became recognized as belonging to the camp community.

One of the things the UMT did while the migrants waited to draw their bedding was to pass out a questionnaire/survey they had put together in Spanish with the S-1. Among the things that the survey revealed was that the religious demographics from Guantanamo were accurate (24 percent Roman Catholic, 24 percent Protestant, and 52 percent other or unchurched). The survey also revealed that among those falling under "other" there were seven Jewish men and that among the migrants there was a Methodist minister (author's interview with Chaplain Jacobs). This gentleman was sought out by the UMT, and after some discussion, he agreed to serve as the resident Protestant pastor for the camp. He also became the primary point of contact for the UMT. The survey identified other professional and skilled craftsmen as well. The migrants who were carpenters made a pulpit, an altar, a number of benches, and a cross which was set up at the entrance to the chapel. The Command Chaplain's Office furnished the chapel's with musical instruments, religious literature, rosaries, Spanish bibles, and New Testaments, as well as altar clothes and antependia for pulpits and lecterns (author's recollection).

As the camp filled, various religious groups began to organize themselves and utilize the chapel. A Seventh Day Adventist group began to meet, as did the Jewish migrants who had their own lay leader. Both in the evening and throughout the day, Bible study groups would meet for fellowship as did a number of prayer and praise groups. One of the Bible studies was led by an American soldier of Cuban descent whose name ironically was Noriega (author's interview with Chaplain Jacobs). There were four to five services per Sunday including Roman Catholic Mass. The contract priests and deacons were as active as their Protestant counterparts. In no time at all one of SSG Ortega's primary responsibilities became the scheduling of the chapel. Their experience in this regard was matched in the other camps.

There were some 2,300 migrants in Camp One including a number of families with close to 300 children. Every other day, the UMT conducted a Children's Bible School with religious videos (in Spanish) and arts and crafts for the youngsters. Often, their mothers would assist and take part in those activities. At the same time, the UMTs were actively involved in providing religious support to the soldiers assigned and attached to the camps. Worship services for the soldiers took place in the recreation tent on Sundays and Bible studies conducted either by chaplains or lay leaders took place on most evenings of the week. After the first month, the UMT in Camp One established a library in the administrative area for all military members using bookshelves from the former office of the long departed Navy chaplains office at Rodman. Working with local congregations who collected and donated books (in Spanish) for the migrants, similar libraries were set up within the other camps as well.

In the Command Chaplains office, boxes of unsolicited religious literature in English and Spanish began to arrive. The Installation Property Book Office, which was the receiving agency, was initially upset because stuff was showing up without the paperwork indicating where, why, how, and whom had purchased it (author's recollection). The explanations would arrive some days later when a letter from this or that Christian/Evangelical group in the United States (usually in Florida) would explain that the literature sent was for the salvation of the migrants who had been denied the knowledge of salvation for so long under the Communist regime of Fidel Castro; and would the chaplains see to it that the migrants received this literature, etc. What soon became evident was that the donating organization would be using this "ministry to the migrants" in their next solicitation for funds and the chaplains were to be used as the messenger boys (and girls). The literature would be reviewed and if it were scripture or actual devotional material, it would be sent across the Canal. However, if it was either a promotion for an organization in the states or was in any way derogatory of other religious traditions (specifically antisemitic or anti-Catholic), it would end up in the dumpster in the parking lot (Command Chaplain's guidance to the author).

On other occasions, however, the organizations wouldn't send literature, they would send their leadership. One of Chaplain Scruggs additional duties became that of tour guide for religious personalities from the Cuban community in Miami who wanted to come to Panama to "minister" to the migrants. The request would come to the USARSO Public Affairs Office who would hand it off to the chaplains like a hot rock. As the

senior chaplain in the Task Force, Chaplain Scruggs was the “stuckee” and the escort for these individuals (author’s recollection).

The chaplain assistants who drove for these people were the most astute observers of these events. Specialist Frank Wharton (who had returned from Suriname to be posted at JTF Safe Haven Headquarters) reported to the Command Chaplain’s Office on one such occasion involving a high profile “monsignor” from Miami. He told the USARSO chaplain’s staff: “It was a joke! It was just a photo op! We took him to each camp, he walked around, had his picture taken and went on to the next camp. The longest time he spent anywhere was maybe forty minutes. That was his ‘ministry to the poor migrants’!” (author’s conversation with Specialist Wharton).

The local churches in Panama City, both the bilingual churches and the purely Panamanian congregations, were genuinely concerned about the spiritual well-being of the migrants and worked with the Chaplains and UMTs to assist them. A particular favorite ministry, not only for the children, but for the adults as well, was the clown ministry conducted by the First Baptist Church of Balboa (a bilingual community with long ties of support to the chaplains in SOUTHCOM). While the choirs of a number of Panamanian congregations of varying denominations were regular visitors to the camps on Sunday evenings (interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

Chaplain Pete Fredrich used money from a Chief of Chaplains Grant to bring the Christian musician Danny Byrum down from the US to play for the soldiers and the migrants. After completing their tour of the camps, Chaplain Fredrich and Mr. Byrum then got on the C-130 bound for Suriname to play for the soldiers stationed there who

were still in the process of preparing the place for the Haitian migrants who would never come (interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

As is so often the case for the Chaplaincy, meeting the requirements of Title 10 of the US Code--providing opportunities for worship--proved to be less of a problem than anticipated. It was the day to day ministry, especially within the camps, that proved to be the more difficult. Not surprisingly, the difficulty often lay in the cultural differences. Especially troubling to a number of chaplains were the incidents of spouse abuse, both physical and verbal. For Chaplain Jacobs, who comes from the state of Washington where any form of marital conflict, by either partner, is liable to see someone spending the night in jail; watching the way some of the Cuban men treated their wives was truly appalling. Equally distressing was the fact that these same patterns of abuse were present among young men and women (some of whom were still in their teens) who had become couples (interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

The abuse, in most cases by the husbands or male partners, was commonplace. It was also seen by the migrants to be a prerogative of the male. So much so, that when US camp authorities, the MPs, or others like the chaplains sought to intervene, their good intentions were met by the males with surprise and a certain amount of umbrage. Staff Sergeant Ortega, Specialist Rayes, and other assistants of Hispanic heritage quietly gave their chaplains tutorials on the place of women in Latin culture, machismo and its effects, and cultural divide between how the interactions between men and women, husbands and wives, differ between the culture of the United States and a place like Cuba. It was an education (interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

Marital problems were not unique to the migrants; the soldier assigned to the camps were reporting marital difficulties as well even though their spouses were only across the Canal. Many of the same problems that arise within units that have deployed for six months began to be seen by the chaplains in the Command Chaplain's Office. Wives were unhappy because they were in a country where they couldn't speak the language, or because they "never" saw their husbands (soldiers could spend one night away from the camp) or they needed their husbands home every day to help with the children. It was the familiar laundry list of complaints generally being made by very young, very immature military spouses. A few actually left their husbands. The men would come home for their overnight to find the house empty, the air-conditioning turned off, and a note saying: "Goodbye. Send me my stuff." Deployments, even across a canal, don't always bring out the best in some people (author's recollection).

Still others found love in the camps. One of the migrant men became very friendly with a female MP from Fort Lewis, Washington whose company was in Panama on a 90-day rotation. The young man apparently decided that if he couldn't get to the states one way, he would get there another. He began to do some serious courting of this MP and she fell hard. He then asked her to marry him and she agreed. She then went to the camp chaplain to set up the wedding. Now at that point in time, Panama was probably the last place in the US Army where a soldier was required to get the permission of his or her commander to get married. Knowing this, the camp chaplain did what the chaplain was supposed to do, he referred the young lady to her company commander, who would then refer it to his battalion commander. The long and the short of it is that

the soldier was on the next C-141 leaving Howard Air Force Base for McCord Air Force Base near Fort Lewis (conversation with SPC Wharton).

As it has been noted earlier, despite the best efforts and good intentions of the UMTs, and every other military member charged with the well being of the migrants, it was a frustrating and dispiriting enterprise for everyone, but especially the migrants. Some of the chaplains noticed that the Panamanian contractors, such as the caterers and the trash haulers, would criticize the US military to the Cubans. They also brought in Panamanian newspapers which were critical not only of the US military's migrant operations, but anything and everything having to do with a US military presence in Panama. The repeated message was: "the US military does nothing but lie. You cannot believe anything they say to you." This only added to an already unpleasant atmosphere of cynicism and distrust on the part of the migrants.

Even so, the Unit Ministry Team, like most soldiers, were taken aback when the riots broke out on the evening of 7 December. Early the next morning, Chaplain Jacobs and SSG Ortega walked the perimeter of the camp. What they saw led them to conclude that the riots were anything but over. They saw Cubans piling up rocks, flattening and sharpening the end-pieces of cots, and pulling up tent pegs to use as clubs. They immediately returned to the administrative area and went to see the S-2 to report their observations. Not five minutes later, the riots began in earnest.

The UMT, along with others not involved in attempting to restrain the rioters, were ordered to evacuate the admin area and move to a parking area north of the camp where the medics were setting up an aid station. There Chaplain Jacobs and Staff

Sergeant Ortega assisted the medics throughout the morning and into the afternoon as injured soldiers were brought to the aid station before being medevaced to Gorgas Hospital (interview with Chaplain Jacobs).

During the noon hour, the Chaplain Resource Manager, whose job called for him to wear a number of hats, went by the Headquarters building for the 92nd Military Police Battalion. Major David Benner, the Battalion Operations Officer (S-3) saw him and said: "Chaplain, there has been a riot at one of the camps and some of our guys were hurt; could you go to Gorgas and check on them?" Major Benner gave the Chaplain the names of the wounded soldiers and the Chaplain went up to the hospital.

Ambulances, military and otherwise, were pouring into the emergency area. Once he got into the hospital itself, he found the entire main floor being used for triage and primary treatment. Finding the two MPs, he called back to the MP battalion to let Major Benner know their prognosis, but Benner and the battalion were on their way to the other side of the Canal, so he ended up giving the message to the personnel NCO.

He then began to minister to the soldiers who were beginning to fill up every available space as they awaited treatment or having been treated, waited to be moved to one of the wards or released back to their units. At some point, the chaplain was joined by the new deputy command chaplain Chaplain (Major) Richard Rogers who also moved among the injured talking, praying, and encouraging them. Other chaplains, including some like Chaplains Fredrich and Jacobs who were living out at the camps, soon arrived to assist. Once it became clear that the chaplains were starting to trip over one another, Chaplain Rogers had those assigned to the garrison stay at the hospital and told the others

to get back to their units once they had checked on their injured. There was more to be done in the units than in the emergency room, and there was (Author's recollection).

For the next week, the Unit Ministry Teams were very intentional about the ways in which they conducted ministry for their soldiers. Debriefing sessions with staff, military police, Special Forces, and Psy Ops personnel, medics, everyone who had been through the riots. They discussed the anger, the disappointment, and the sense of betrayal (interview with Chaplain Jacobs). The garrison chaplains (including the author) were also present when Major General Crocker met with the Family Support Groups. They were present to provide opportunities for the family members who felt an overwhelming sense of anger at both the migrants and the Army for endangering their husbands, to vent their frustrations, to someone who was perceived of as "safe." What they said would not come back on them or their husbands. There would be chaplains present at the now weekly family support group meeting until the end of the operation.

In the camps, no services were conducted by outsiders for the next three weeks. There were no masses conducted by the contract priests and deacons. The only masses said consisted of a weekly mass conducted by Chaplain (Captain) James Betz, the Catholic pastor from the Atlantic side who knew enough Spanish to say Mass and preach a brief, if somewhat, rudimentary homily (interview with Chaplain Betz). In the meantime, guard towers were going up and additional units were arriving from Fort Bragg, Fort Campbell, and Fort Polk, as well as additional reservist chaplains.

On 23 December, all of the families were removed from Camp One and elsewhere to Camp Four. All of the other camps would hold only single men. It was also on the

23rd of December that the first of the shows of force began. Soldiers in protective gear, fully armed, rehearsing their actions should another riot occur. These shows of force would take place several times a week (interview with Chaplain Jordin).

For Chaplain Jacobs, the most immediate change was that she could no longer enter the migrants camp unless accompanied by a male soldier. This was the case for all women soldiers. While Chaplain Jacobs had usually gone into the camp together with Staff Sergeant Ortega, the new rule was another indication of the change which had occurred. From the riots on, once the contract clergy were allowed back into the camps, ministry for the migrant community primarily became the work of the civilian contractors. It was the riots more than anything else that made Brigadier General Wilson relent and allow the contracts for Spanish speaking Protestant Pastors to be established.

After the riots, the ministry of the Unit Ministry Teams returned to being almost exclusively soldier focused. For Chaplain (Captain) David Hillis, the 3rd Brigade Chaplain for the 82nd Airborne Division who deployed with the 2nd Battalion of the 502nd P.I.R. (because they were without a battalion chaplain); his soldiers were his entire ministry. Like the other chaplains who had deployed with their units to support Operation Safe Haven shortly before Christmas, the only time he really saw the migrants was when he was present during a show of force exercise.

Chaplain Hillis' main concern was getting his soldiers through the Christmas holidays (they had deployed on the 23rd of December) and doing what he could to assist them in coping with the boredom inherent in constabulary duty. One of the most successful programs he was able to work out was with the Florida State College which

had a campus in Panama for the military. With a minimum of effort and the support of the command, soldiers from the 502nd P.I.R. earned six hours of college credit in the three months they were in Panama (interview with Chaplain Hillis).

As the security mission grew with deploying units, Chaplain Scruggs, the JTF Chaplain found his job becoming more and more administrative. Working together with the Command Chaplains Office, he developed a series of retreat programs for the military members of every service taking part in the Joint Task Force. Occasionally, however, he found himself in conflict with chaplains from the Air Force and Navy who went out of their way to let anyone and everyone know that they were reluctant players on this team. This reluctance was often exacerbated by the fact that these services were cavalier in assigning personnel to this operation. As a result, it was not uncommon to have an Air Force or Navy O-5 filling an O-3 position. To add insult to injury, they were supposed to take orders from an Army O-4. On more than one occasion, Chaplain Goodwillie was called upon to explain the facts of life to these gentlemen. On another occasion, it would take the face to face intervention of Brigadier General Wilson to induce a spirit of cooperation out of a Navy Commander (interview with Chaplain Goodwillie). All in all, there was little collegiality between the ministry teams of the different services.

As the operation transitioned into Operation Safe Passage, and the return of the Cubans to Guantanamo, the focus on ministry became simply assisting the soldiers to remain focused on the mission. In the end, it was all very anti-climatic. The Cubans got on the buses, they then got on the planes, and flew back to GITMO. Shortly thereafter, the soldier got on the buses, then got on the planes, and flew back to home station.

To quote one reservist chaplain, Chaplain (CPT) David McClary USAR who was cited in *Encouraging Faith, Serving Soldiers: A History of the US Army Chaplaincy, 1975-1995*:

Some say Operation Safe Haven was a waste, but it did help the Panamanian economy and the Cubans. The cost for the Operation was estimated at 180 million dollars and employed 5,000 personnel. The chaplains worked themselves silly to give support to the troops, Cubans, and Panamanians. Ministry had priority over careers and awards. Not much publicity . . . a lot of giving and caring . . . revivals, baptisms, gifts, musicals, Bibles, long hours, candy, services and money and/or donations. The 505th had gone and the MPs are pulling up stakes. My tent is gone, but found most of my stuff way down the road in a still-standing tent. My Chaplain's kit is missing. Two uniforms missing, watch broken. No electricity for troops, hot (107 degrees), no fan, no food except JTF stuff. I am the only chaplain out here. I will have to move tomorrow. . . will probably start to in process to out process. . . could have been worse. . . good to sit here and rest, feeling a job well done. (Brinsfield, Encouraging Faith, 370).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Having reviewed both the operation and the ministry conducted over the course of the operation at some length, we must once again take up the primary question that underlies this thesis: given the normal ambiguity and complexity of Humanitarian Assistance Military Operations Other Than War, can the Military Chaplaincy continue to assume the adequacy of its doctrine and make no distinction between religious support tasks in war and Humanitarian Assistance (HA) MOOTW?

I would argue that the answer is no. Religious support tasks while similar in character are very different in their intent. War is different. As the Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest said it so precisely: "War means fighting, and fighting means killing" (*Confederates in the Attic*, 155). Religious support is focused on preparing the soldier to face this reality. To kill other human beings directly or indirectly and to face the very real possibility of being killed, maimed or wounded in turn. The Unit Ministry Teams intent is to provide the soldier with those means of grace (the Word of God, the Sacraments and ordinances of their church or religious tradition) that will enable the soldier to fight, to endure and if need be face death with faith, confidence, and a sense of peace.

In HA or MOOTW the intention is somewhat different because the UMT is dealing with both soldiers and civilians and the character of religious support will be different for each group. With the soldiers the focus will be on maintaining morale. This may or may not have a specific spiritual aspect, but the concern will be for the

morale of the soldier as he or she goes through the course of the operation. When providing religious support to non-military personnel, the focus will be on assisting people first with their immediate needs and then to provide them with spiritual and/or psychological support, as the Ministry Teams did in the course at Safe Haven.

In our desire to be all things to all people chaplain doctrine fails to emphasize the very real difference. So let us consider the doctrine.

First it must be stated that the doctrine in place at the time of the operation made no mention of HA or MOOTW. However, there was, and had been, a draft version of the current edition of FM 16-1 on the street so to speak for sometime and indeed it would be published shortly after the conclusion of Operation Safe Haven.

In chapter 6 of FM 16-1 *Religious Support* (May 1995) we find that "Religious Support in Operations Other Than War" is identified as consisting of two types of operation: Domestic Operations and Peace Operations which is consistent with FM 100-23-1 *Humanitarian Assistance*.

One of the specific missions falling within the realm of Domestic Operations is Mass Immigration Emergency Support Operations. The identification of this mission as part of Domestic Operations reflects the religious support provided during JTF Guantanamo in 1991-1992 rather than Safe Haven or Sea Signal since the Field Manual was going to the printers at the time they were being conducted.

Even so, Mass Immigration Emergency Support Operations does little more than identify the above as a mission within the Domestic Operations sphere; or as students of the Command and General Staff College are want to say: "It is just a big hand wave."

Meaning acknowledgment of a reality without really addressing the problem therein.

This is what the FM has to say about Mass Immigration Emergency Support Operations:

“The DOD may support the Immigration and Naturalization Service when it is unable to handle a surge in immigration and refugee traffic. The DOD assists with the reception, processing, transportation, and detention of the immigrants and refugees.

Detainees on DOD installations receive a full range of service.

Religious Support Planning Considerations:

1. Perceptions of foreign nationals about the US Military
2. Cultural, linguistic and religious differences
3. Social, political and religious reasons for migrations
4. Indigenous religious structures and leaders
5. Impact on local population (FM 16-1, P. 6-2)

And that is all that the FM has to say on the subject.

What is of greater interest is what it does not say. It does not address what “full service” means; does this imply chaplain religious support only or does it include the use of contract clergy or certified lay ministers? These options are permitted under AR 165-1, but 16-1 does not spell out whether they are to be used to support HA or MOOTW as well. It does not address how any of the considerations mentioned will affect or could possibly affect the conduct of religious support. It does not address the role of the soldier in this type of operation. It does not address how ministry teams are going to bridge the perceptions and differences or make inroads into the structures.

Why? Because of the assumption inherent in religious support doctrine: “Religious support tasks remain constant, only conditions change. . . ” which means that religious support will always be adequate. But it was not.

Let us consider what doctrine does say; it notes “Religious Support Planning (RSP) Considerations.” If you will recall from chapter 3 that Chaplain (Colonel) Goodwillie wrote the Religious Support Appendix for the original operations plan (OPLAN) that called for the safe havening of Haitian migrants. That OPLAN came to provide the basis for the operation that would become JTF Safe Haven. However, as neither the OPLAN or the RSP was either rewritten or published, there was an absence of intentionality from the beginning.

This was especially true for the chaplaincy. No chaplain or chaplain assistant for that matter ever saw a copy of the RSP, even though chaplain doctrine past and present calls for the creation of an RSP at every level of ministry from the battalion on up. From the Chaplain Officer Basic Course on, chaplains are instructed to provide a Religious Support Plan for every operation undertaken by their units. Unfortunately, as a body, chaplains have a bad habit of not doing them; or doing them in such a way as to merely check the block.

Why is this? There are a number of reasons, the most frequent one cited by chaplains when the subject arises is that their commanders do not care about them doing “that stuff” (RSPs), their commanders just want them to do ministry. Not surprisingly it is what these same chaplains want to do as well, because it is where they feel most comfortable. The demands of the MDMP or having to work his way into the planning

process is neither easy or comfortable, so they are not really interested and use their bosses mandate to do ministry as their way around it.

As a result chaplains end up writing Religious Support Plans for their commanders or as is more likely the case, their unit Executive Officers or Plans and Operations Officers (G-3/S-3) to read. In the end, the RSP may become part of the OPLAN, but it is seldom, if ever, seen by subordinate chaplains. Chaplain Goodwillie's RSP was never reproduced or distributed to the chaplains tasked to conduct the mission, nor was a copy given to Chaplain (Major) Scruggs the JTF Safe Haven Chaplain. Nor did Chaplain Scruggs develop an RSP of his own.

The only Religious Support Plan that was both written, published, and executed during Operation Safe Haven was the RSP developed by Chaplain (Captain) Vernon Jordin for the 5th Battalion, 87th Infantry. It was a standard soldier-focused RSP.

One of the problems inherent in making an assumption of adequacy with regard to ministry is that such an assumption invites and encourages the practice of "adocracy" which is, all to often, the way chaplains prefer to go about the business of ministry.

At the same time, attempts were made during Safe Haven to do mission analysis. *The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Initial Observations--Migrant Operations, Panama/Cuba May 1995* noted with approval that the JTF chaplains had conducted "a ministry needs assessment to determine how best to provide chaplain coverage to both migrant and US military populations" (CALL 1995, I-41). As Chaplain Jacobs noted in chapter 4, this action went a long way towards providing a focus for the

efforts of the ministry teams. Unfortunately, it never resulted in a Religious Support Plan.

Interestingly enough, the CALL document states the following: "Force planners should conduct a detailed mission analysis early in the operation to determine chaplain support requirements." What is interesting is that no thought is given to the idea that a chaplain should be part of the mission analysis process. Yet, who else would be able to bring to the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) an understanding of the unique requirements necessary to determine religious support essentials.

Historically, chaplains have been reluctant to enter the G-3/S-3 planning area and establish a place for themselves at the map board or sand table, and be present during the mission analysis and war gaming phases of the MDMP. The chaplain, as it has been noted earlier, is a member of the commander's special staff. Chaplains, as staff officers, bring a unique perspective that needs to be considered during the planning process. It is often said (by chaplains), that the G-3/S-3 staff does not believe this or take chaplains seriously. However, more often than not, it is the chaplain not the plans officer who fails to take his/her role seriously or believe that they have something to bring to the planning process.

Chaplains fail their commanders and fail the Chaplain's Corps when they absent themselves from the planning process. Senior chaplains (which is to say Corps, Division, and Brigade chaplains) enable ministry, they do not necessarily carry out all aspects of ministry. This is, or should be, an old song for chaplains reading this thesis, but as of this point in history, the chaplaincy is still absent from the map board and

permitting others to assess and analyze the religious support requirements of operations and missions.

While there was religious support input in the initial planning for a Safe Haven operation, there was no follow-up. The absence of an overall OPLAN does not mean that the chaplaincy should have failed to produce a RSP for the operation.

Another assumption that needs to be challenged is that there is no difference between providing religious support and ministry for soldiers and caring for civilians.

There most certainly is a difference between the ministry to soldier and the ministry provided for civilians. As alluded to earlier in this chapter, whether in war or in the performance of peacekeeping, HA, MOOTW, the needs of soldiers are almost entirely focused on the individuals emotional and spiritual dimension. Soldiers look for counseling; be it spiritual, ethical, personal, marital or moral in nature. They seek out a chaplain to provide them with an emotion and/or moral compass to get them through what ever storm is passing through their lives, beyond the mission in which they are engaged. At the same time soldiers are coming to the chaplain specifically for the spiritual nurture and encouragement they receive from prayer, from worship, from the hearing of God's Word and the partakinng of these sacraments and ordinances their religious traditions provide for the comfort of their souls.

For make no mistake, at the end of the day what the chaplain is offering the soldier is a moment of grace and divine love that will enable that soldier to go into battle with the hope of salvation. Knowing that should he die, he will do so in the promise of everlasting life.

Civilians on the other hand may seek the spiritual dimension and in some circumstances may even seek counseling but more often than not they will be seeking help in matters of survival and quality of life in that order. First they will be looking for the means to survive along with their families following whatever crisis has caused them to abandon or lose their homes; and then once safe, fed and clothed, they will look for the means to improve their condition, and restore their lives to its former condition.

Similar skills may be called for, but there is a different focus and intent, one which needs to be recognized. Yet there are unresolved issues: for example.

To date the Chaplains Corps has yet to resolve the question of the legality of providing ministry to civilians. While there has never been an obstacle to providing religious support to civilians overseas, such as Operation Provide Comfort for the Kurds in 1991 and the early stage of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, it is in question as to whether the same rules apply when those civilians are on military installations which are technically US property.

After all, during the clean up operation conducted following Hurricane Andrew, the Judge Advocate General office was very cautious in permitting chaplains to exercise "ministry," (i.e., prayer, worship services, any outward religious expression) lest the chaplaincy be perceived as violating the establishment of Religion clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. While the JAG was seeking to protect the chaplaincy from further challenges to its existence (a particularly close challenge having been beaten back less than a decade earlier), many chaplains and JAG officers as well now believe that the JAG was being too protective.

The problem is that once again, to date, we have not as a branch sought a resolution of the matter in order that we might incorporate ministry to civilians into our doctrine. Chapter 6 of FM 16-1 does the “big hand wave” in terms of peace operations and humanitarian assistance, but it does not specifically address ministry to civilians on or off the battlefield.

Hopefully, it is, or will be, addressed shortly as the presence of civilians on the battlefield has become part of the scenarios used at the major combat training centers within the US Army. Recently during a rotation at the National Training Center the questions was raised as to who would deal with civilians on the battlefield. The observer controllers were saying, “Isn’t that a chaplain’s function?” The Unit Ministry Teams, both chaplain and assistant alike were adamant in saying, “We don’t think so.” The UMTs first priority must always be the soldiers. However, as it falls into the “it’s human, it’s messy, you’re not supposed to kill it, category,” there are those who will believe that it will belong to the ministry team by default.

The issue of legality and responsibility needs to be determined, specifically addressing the question as to *when* the UMT is to engage the civilian population? On order, as part of the OPLAN, after the battle, during the battle, what is the relationship between the UMT and Civil Affairs (CA)? Are not civilians their responsibility? Is the UMT to be seen as the first contact element who then does a handover to CA? How will this impact on religious support to the unit? The questions need to find answers in doctrine so that when a commander turns to his chaplain and says: Do something about

it as commanders historically have done, the UMT will have a plan or at the very least a doctrinal foundation upon which to build a plan.

During Operation Safe Haven as the chaplaincy was tasked with providing religious support, the question of legality never arose. It was simply an aspect of the mission they were required to execute. There are some questions as to the efficacy of the ministry provided.

This is a difficult area to assess as is so much of what is done by the chaplaincy. This is due to the fact that ministry cannot really be quantified. When this subject was raised in an MMAS seminar, a classmate remarked, "Well can't you go by number of souls saved?" Would that it were so simple, unfortunately it is a question the Chaplains Corp has been wrestling with for many years without finding a satisfactory answer. It should be said that this issue has been under discussion with the civilian ministry as well. This author first heard a clergyman raise the subject nearly thirty-five years ago, and the civilian sector has not found a solution either.

The reason for the difficulty is that more often than not, the effects of ministry are not seen in the recipients life until long after the spiritual crisis or moment of awakening has occurred. Every chaplain, every minister, priest, rabbi, roshi, or iman, has had someone come up to them years later and tell them, "I heard you say" or "preach" or "teach;" and then go on to quote something that chaplain, etc. is supposed to have said five, ten, twenty, or however many years ago, and end with "and it changed my life." Needless to say that chaplain/clergyman has absolutely no recollection of having said anything so intelligent or insightful, but according to the person standing before

them, it changed their life. In Christianity, this tends to be identified as Grace--a gift from God that is neither merited or earned, but freely given out of God's love for humankind. How can something like this be quantified? It cannot, much to the frustration of the bureaucratic process.

Lacking the ability to quantify religious support, the chaplaincy must fall back on intentionality.

Webster's Dictionary defines intent as an "aim or purpose directed with strained or eager attention" (Webster New World Dictionary 3rd Edition). Yet the word "intent" has a theological meaning as well both in moral and sacramental theology. In moral theology "the intention influences the morality of an action. A good intention makes a morally indifferent action good and increases the worth of an action good in itself, but does not make a bad action good" (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* 1997, 840).

In sacramental theology, it is "the purpose of doing what the church does (*good facit ecclesia*) (Oxford 1997, 840). In other words, it is the will to offer a sacrament in the form, manner and spirit prescribed the church. Within Catholic tradition, it is one of the ways in which the validity of a sacrament is measured.

For a sacrament to be valid, three things need to be present: the form, the manner, and the intent. For example, for a Christian baptism to be valid, the form is water. The manner is that person or child being baptized is either immersed in the water or has the water poured over him by another Christian (whether a member of the clergy or laity is unimportant); in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the intent is

that the baptized becomes a child of God, a co-heir with Christ and a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

The intent signifies that a sacrament is an act of the will both on the part of the Church and the individual receiving the sacrament.

Now why is this important and of what possible relevance could it have to the conduct of a military operation? The answer is simple. Title 10 of the US code which allows for the presence of chaplains in the US military for the purpose of providing opportunities for worship. Therefore according to the law that governs this nation, chaplains are in the Army and her sister services to provide opportunities for worship. This is the primary purpose for chaplains.

The chaplaincy traditionally has given the broadest possible definition to the term “worship” in order to embrace the religious diversity that has always existed within the United States and her citizenry. This definition, while almost trite, is none-the-less effective in stating the intent: worship consists of “bring God to the soldier (and their family members) and the soldier to God.” This is the intent lying behind every act of worship conducted by chaplains of every tradition. It is also the intent that is the foundation for every level of religious support.

At the same time, by regulation, the chaplain is the advisor to the commander on matters of religion, morality, and moral. Too often the word morality is given a narrow definition having more to do with the moral and/or ethical climate, or the conduct of individuals within a unit, but it goes beyond this. As a senior officer, Vice Admiral James Service once observed on a panel discussing ethical conduct in war: “We need to

believe we are doing moral things for a moral government.” The chaplain has the moral obligation to see that his commander understands the ethical implications of the operation, and is undertaking said operation with a good intention.

Chaplains then must also be very intentional in their efforts to provide religious support; which brings us back to the planning process. Chaplains like their staff counterparts must have a specific end state in mind. One that is based upon a thorough assessment of the situation. If there is a desired end state, then there needs to be a fully developed plan that can be executed. This must include an assessment of the short comings and a plan to address them.

Chaplain Goodwillie’s self-defined role was essentially a statement of intent: “To balance our (limited) assets. . . ” to “personally support chaplains in the camps. . . ” to “coordinate with other services. . . ” These were his objectives. An objective is an intent. Two very good words used all the time in the MDMP. Unfortunately, Chaplain Goodwillie, like the majority of his peers then and now never shared, stated, or articulated his intent. This is not to pick on Chaplain Goodwillie, it is a failure of our Branch.

Why? Because so much of ministry is reactive rather than proactive which is ironic. Chaplains know how to plan worship services, retreats, prayer breakfasts, duty days with God etc. There are chaplains who create truly incredible programs, but when it comes to applying the same energy and ability to a military operation become enormously passive. Their program at that point becomes response. The UMT will respond.

FM 16-1 enshrines responsive religious support. Now obviously when one is speaking about support to causalties on the battlefield or injuries during training or crisis's in garrison, ministry is in response to the event, but this cannot be the sole objective of religious support. "Nurture the living, comfort the wounded and dying, honor the dead" is not enough. This is no doubt heresy to many within the Chaplaincy, but it is not enough, unless coupled with an aggressive intent.

For example, the most glaring deficiency in the religious support provided by the ministry teams during Safe Haven was the fact that not a single chaplain involved in the day to day operation of the camps spoke Spanish (this does not include Chaplain Betz who was not assigned to the Joint Task Force, and was only brought in to provide Roman Catholic worship services for the migrant population following the riots).

It was not that the chaplains in the JTF did not speak the Spanish language fluently, none of them spoke the most rudimentary Spanish. Once they got beyond the words "hola," "buenos dias or buenos noches," or "como esta usted" conversation came to a complete halt. It fortunate that there were two Hispanic chaplain assistants who were able to take up the slack by enabling religious support as translators, and were able to provide direct support themselves (Specialist Reyes being nicknamed "Padre" by the migrants). However this does not change the fact that chaplains were unable to meet the needs of individuals within the migrant community because of the language barrier.

A further consequence is that the issue of language may have provided an excuse for some Ministry Teams to avoid serving the migrants because they could not speak Spanish.

Chaplain Jacobs was fortunate in having found a Methodist minister among the Cubans in Camp One, however, the unwillingness of the JTF commander to contract Panamanian Protestant pastors had a serious effect upon the quality of religious support that the chaplaincy had been tasked to provide.

The chaplains and assistants assigned to Guantanamo experienced the same frustration and the same inability to transcend the difficulty and the same statement would be true for every HA/MOOTW that UMTs have been part of since the end of the Gulf War. Language barriers are going to be part of every future operation overseas involving civilians. However, assuming that religious support will be adequate in spite of such considerations is questionable at best, and irresponsible at its very worst.

It comes down to intent. The tasks of religious support may differ only in environment and degree, but there is a very different intention required for the two. Ultimately, this becomes the problem inherent in assuming the adequacy of religious support; assumption means the forfeiture of intentionally. The aim, the purpose, the specific act of the will, shall be absent morally and sacramentally from the religious support the chaplaincy is called upon to give.

Religious support is sacred--which is to say it has the character of the sacramental in that when ministry occurs it creates a moment in time that is separate and holy, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace (BCP 1928, 581). It requires a good intent.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has become fashionable over the last two decades for many seminaries in the Protestant Christian traditions to emphasize the role of the prophetic ministry. This practice is a curious conceit since the role of the prophet is to stand outside of an institution and speak (in God's name) to the failings of that institution be it the Church, the State or what have you. The problem with the fashionable conceit is that the clergy are members of the institution, and in fact stand for the institution. When institutional men or women try to be prophetic it comes out sounding like sniveling at best and whining at its worst.

While divine inspiration would have been nice this thesis is neither an attempt at prophecy or an exercise in sniveling. It is the result of information gathered and the personal observation of the author. The following recommendations offer little that is new, and heartily endorse much that has already been put into place by the Chaplain Corps.

Since 1996 the Chaplain Officer Basic and Advanced (now called Career) Course have emphasized the role of the chaplain as a staff officer, with the responsibility of being part of the planning process. The MDMP has become a key part of the core curriculum for both entering chaplains and those on the career path. This needs to be continued. While there are many within the Chaplain Corps who complain about the Chaplain Schools recent focus on military staff skills to the seeming exclusion of pastoral skills, those who do so, are often those who have been unwilling to embrace the necessary tension the chaplain must accept as both staff officer and pastor. Based on

what took place during Operation Safe Haven, the Chaplain Corps must continue to teach and develop the planning and operational skills necessary for the chaplain to serve as a staff officer and member of the commanders planning staff.

At the same time recognizing that at this point in time the majority of serving chaplains went through the Basic and Advanced Course prior to 1996. It is recommended that the Chief of Chaplain's Office require that the MDMP be included in the monthly Ministry Team training programs conducted and the Installation Corps and Division levels. It is further recommended that this training be conducted by the Plans Officer on the Corps Chaplains staff or the Deputy Division Chaplain; as these positions are now required to be filled by graduates of the Command and General Staff Officer Course.

It is also recommended that the Chaplain Corps develop within its doctrine a position on the Ministry Team's role in providing religious support to civilians on the battlefield and Peacekeeping, HA, and MOOTW operations. As the number and scope of operations like Safe Haven, Restore Hope, Uphold Democracy, and the operation in Albania and Macedonia on the border of Kosovo that is taking place at the time of this writing, Ministry Teams are being called upon to engage civilians. The Chaplaincy can either continue to do the big "hand wave," and let someone else proscribe our doctrine or the chaplaincy can do it. It is further recommended that as the first priority of the Ministry Team is to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines making up the task forces of the future. The appropriate time for the Ministry Team to engage in religious support to civilians is after the hostilities, not while the battle is taking place. This may not always be possible, but the priority of pastoral care for the chaplain and chaplain

assistant is the soldier. The first contact with civilians belongs to Civil Affairs not the Chaplaincy.

None of the recommendations are either startling or prophetic, nor hopefully can they be regarded as sniveling. However, they have one thing in common: they reflect the need for the chaplain and the chaplaincy to be very intentional about religious support and repudiate the assumption of adequacy.

In conclusion Operation Safe Haven was a relatively minor operation as HA, MOOTW goes. Like other military operations carried out in the last decade of the twentieth century it was reactive and responsive as opposed to well conceived and executed. Policy by CNN is a phrase used on the Sunday morning political talk shows; a phrase implying that the US makes policy in response to the visual images on the television screen rather than as a result of analysis and deliberation. The appearance of action for the sake of action rather than action that is substantive and meaningful.

While cynicism can easily raise questions as to the integrity or sincerity of those policy makers who set Operation Safe Haven in motion, there can be no question as to the good intentions of the US military personnel in the Southern Command and their family members who sought to do good for the Cuban migrants. Yet in spite of these good intentions, for the Cubans, and for those serving in SOUTHCOM, and those who deployed, it was a sad interruption in their lives.

In the end all of the Cubans with the exception of one or two who went to be with relatives in Venezuela, ended up going to the US, even the recalcitrance. It could be said, that in the end they won.

The service members too, would return to the US or to their follow-on assignments. It had not been about winning for them, but about doing their duty, and they did.

This thesis is entitled “The Assumption of Adequacy.” In the end it should be said that my argument has never been with the notion of assumption, however the idea that anyone in the military would consider adequacy to be an acceptable standard of performance is objectionable. If our purpose in life as I was taught long ago in catechism class is to glorify God with our lives, then our ministry, and the ministry of the Chaplains Corps must not accept adequacy as a standard or as a reflection of our service to God. Only excellence, which is the Army standard for everything else, is an acceptable offering and sacrifice to the Divinity.

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